Table of Contents

Introduction

Introduction

- Core Concepts & Vile Damage
- Evil Alignments & Using Evil Content
- About This Book

Chapter 1: The Nature of Evil

Chapter 1: The Nature of Evil

- Gray Areas
- Defining Evil
- Evil in Your Game
- Types of Evil Acts
- Fetishes and Addictions
- Vile Gods and Races
- Creating Villains
- Example Villains
- Malign Sites

Chapter 2: Variant Rules

Chapter 2: Variant Rules

- Possession
- Sacrifice
- Curses
- Diseases
- Dark Powers
- Evil Resources
- Evil Effects

Chapter 3: Evil Equipment

Chapter 3: Evil Equipment

- Torture Devices
- Execution Equipment
- Armor Equipment Traps
- Alchemical Items
- Drugs

- Poisons
- Material Components

Chapter 4: Feats

Chapter 4: Feats

- General Feats
- Metamagic Feats
- Vile Feats
- Deformity Feats

Chapter 5: Prestige Classes

Chapter 5: Prestige Classes

- Cancer Mage
- Demonologist
- Diabolist
- Thralls and Disciples
- Vermin Lord
- Warrior of Darkness
- Ur-Priest

Chapter 6: Magic

Chapter 6: Magic

- Evil Spells Overview
- Bard Spells
- Oathbreaker Spells
- Cleric Spells
- Druid Spells
- Sorcerer/Wizard Spells
- Evil Magic Items
- Evil Artifacts

Chapter 7: The Lower Planes

Chapter 7: The Lower Planes

- The Abyss
- The Nine Hells
- Demon Lords
- Archdevils
- Other Lower Planes
- Planar Travel
- Planar Traits

Chapter 8: Evil Monsters

Chapter 8: Evil Monsters

- Demons
- Devils
- Kythons
- Vile Undead
- Corrupted Creatures
- Bone Creatures
- Unique Monsters

Appendices

Appendices

- Appendix A: Quick Reference
- Appendix B: Encounter Tables
- Appendix C: DM Tools
- Appendix D: NPC Gallery
- Appendix E: Magic Item Tables
- Appendix F: Spell List
- Appendix G: Glossary

Homebrew Supplement

Homebrew Supplement

- Homebrew Subclasses
- Racial Options
- Backgrounds
- Warlock Options
- Dark Gifts and Trinkets
- Additional Spells
- Evil Organizations
- Homebrew Rules

Introduction

Welcome to the Book of Vile Darkness, a comprehensive guide to evil in Dungeons & Dragons 5th Edition. This book explores the darkest aspects of the D&D multiverse, providing rules, options, and inspiration for incorporating evil themes into your campaigns.

Whether you're a Dungeon Master looking to create compelling villains, a player interested in exploring morally complex characters, or simply curious about the darker side of fantasy, this book offers tools and content to enhance your game.

Core Concepts

Vile Damage

Some attacks and effects deal vile damage, a particularly malevolent form of harm that reduces a creature's hit point maximum. This reduction persists until the creature receives healing magic from a consecrated source or powerful restoration magic.

Evil Alignments

This book primarily deals with creatures and characters of lawful evil, neutral evil, and chaotic evil alignments. These represent different philosophies of evil:

- **Lawful Evil**: Tyranny, oppression, and organized evil
- **Neutral Evil**: Pure selfishness and amorality
- **Chaotic Evil**: Destruction, madness, and unrestrained evil

Using Evil Content

Evil themes work best when they:

- Create meaningful moral choices and dilemmas
- Serve the story rather than being included for shock value
- Respect player comfort levels and boundaries
- Provide opportunities for heroism through opposition

The chapters that follow detail specific rules, monsters, magic, and options for bringing these dark elements to your table.

About This Book

This version of the Book of Vile Darkness has been fully updated for Dungeons & Dragons 5th Edition, including:

- **Complete rules conversion** from the original 3.5e source material
- **New homebrew content** to expand options for all classes
- **Ready-to-use appendices** with encounter tables, NPCs, and reference materials
- **Designer notes** explaining conversion choices and providing guidance for Dungeon Masters

All content follows standard 5e formatting and mechanics, making it immediately usable in your campaign.

Chapter 1: The Nature of Evil

Introduction to Evil

Gray Areas

Even with the most black-and-white, objective approach to good and evil, gray areas will always exist. Consider this example: A terrible disease has come to the village of Varro, and the cure lies in the heartwood of the sacred trees of the Varrowood. The villagers go into the wood to get the cure. The druids of the Varrowood believe that the trees are holy and should not be violated. They try to stop the villagers. Is either side truly evil in this scenario? Probably not.

Not all conflicts are based on good versus evil. It is possible for two good nations to go to war. It is likely that two evil nations will go to war. Is it evil for your character to kill a good character if your character's kingdom is at war with his? That's certainly a gray area. Characters who are extremely strict in their moral outlook should examine the reasons behind the war very closely. In general, quarter should be given and accepted. Such a character should cause no more damage and inflict no more harm than is necessary. If possible, he or she should find a different way to resolve the conflict.

Defining Evil

Examining the actions of the malevolent not only helps define what evil is, but it also gives an insight into the schemes of a villain. What follows is more than a list that defines evil as opposed to good. Read over the following sections to get ideas for villainous plots, schemes, motivations, and personalities.

The fundamental truth is that evil is not just about individual acts, but about intent, context, and the systematic corruption of good. Evil characters may sometimes perform acts that appear good on the surface, but their motivations and ultimate goals reveal their true nature.

Evil in Your Game

When incorporating evil into your D&D campaign, consider the following:

- **Player Agency**: Evil should be something players can fight against, understand, and potentially overcome
- **Moral Complexity**: Gray areas make for more interesting storytelling than black-and-white scenarios
- **Consequences**: Evil actions should have meaningful impacts on the world and its inhabitants
- **Redemption**: Consider whether redemption is possible for evil characters, or if some evils are beyond saving

The nature of evil in your campaign should serve the story you want to tell while providing meaningful challenges and choices for your players.

Types of Evil Acts

Lying

Misdirection, tricks, and manipulation are tools of the trade for most villains. With such tools, they can lead enemies into traps, both physical and otherwise. A well-told, wellplaced lie can redirect a whole army, change the opinion of an entire city's populace, or simply make an adventurer open the wrong door in a dungeon.

Some liars are compulsive; that is, they have a psychological need to lie. Others delight in fooling people. If a villain can get a foe to believe a lie, he has shown himself (at least in his own mind) to be superior to that foe.

Intelligent villains often have proficiency (or expertise) in Deception to facilitate their lies. Of course, being liars themselves alerts them to the fact that others probably lie just as much as they do. Thus, they often have a high Insight modifier as well.

Lying is not necessarily an evil act, though it is a tool that can easily be used for evil ends. Lying is so easy to use for evil purposes that most knightly codes and the creeds of many good religions forbid it altogether.

Cheating

Cheating is breaking the rules for personal gain. When evil villains cheat, it's not just at games. They create contracts with clauses that they can manipulate to trick others. Villains manipulate officials so that evildoers are set free instead of going to prison. They rig their enemies' equipment so that it breaks or does not function properly. Cheaters may threaten the lives of a councilman's family to make him vote for their plan. They may use spells and poison to ensure that a particular gladiator dies in the arena so that they can earn a profit by wagering on the survivor.

Theft

Any child can tell you that stealing is wrong. Villains, however, often see theft as the best way to acquire what they want. Evil people pay only for things they cannot take.

An evil character needs a reason not to steal. Fear of being caught is the most common deterrent, but sometimes a villain elects not to steal an item because he or she doesn't want to incur the wrath of its owner.

Betrayal

A betrayal is often nothing more than an elaborate lie, but its implications are greater. Such an act involves earning someone's trust and then using that trust against him or her. Common acts of betrayal include learning and then revealing secrets, or using trust to get close to one's enemies for an attack or theft.

Betrayal does not have to be intentional—or at least it does not have to start intentionally. Sometimes a character can be tempted into betraying someone whose trust he or she earned legitimately.

Murder

Killing is one of the most horrible acts that a creature can commit. Murder is the killing of an intelligent creature for a nefarious purpose: theft, personal gain, perverse pleasure, or the like.

The heroes who go into the green dragon's woodland lair to slay it are not murderers. In a fantasy world based on an objective definition of evil, killing an evil creature to stop it from doing further harm is not an evil act. Even killing an evil creature for personal gain is not exactly evil (although it's not a good act), because it still stops the creature's predations on the innocent.

Evil beings delight in murder. It is the ultimate expression of their power and their willingness to commit any sort of heinous act.

Vengeance

Revenge is a powerful force. An act of vengeance does not have to be evil, but the evil mindset usually redefines the concept as "revenge at any price." Vengeance without limits can quickly lead to all sorts of evil acts.

Forgiveness and mercy are not traits that most evil creatures possess. Vengeance for wrongs committed against them—or even for perceived wrongs—is the only appropriate response.

Worshiping Evil Gods and Demons

Priests who revere dark powers are as evil as the beings they serve. In the name of Vecna, Erythnul, or Lolth, these foul emissaries make living sacrifices, conduct malevolent rites, and put schemes in motion to aid their patrons.

Evil temples are sometimes secret places hidden within unsuspecting communities. Larger, more permanent shrines to malevolence are usually situated farther away from civilization.

Animating the Dead or Creating Undead

Unliving corpses—corrupt mockeries of life and purity—are inherently evil. Creating them is one of the most heinous crimes against the world that a character can commit. Even if they are commanded to do something good, undead invariably bring negative energy into the world, which makes it a darker and more evil place.

Casting Evil Spells

Evil spells may create undead, inflict undue suffering, harm another's soul, or produce any of a slew of similar effects. Sometimes, a nonevil spellcaster can get away with casting a few evil spells, as long as he or she does not do so for an evil purpose. But the path of evil magic leads quickly to corruption and destruction.

Damning or Harming Souls

While harming one's enemies physically is not inherently villainous, harming their souls is always evil. Only the foulest of villains could actually want to cause pain to another creature's eternal aspect.

Consorting with Fiends

If characters can be judged by the company they keep, then those who deal with fiends—demons and devils—are surely evil beings themselves. Fiends are the ultimate expression of evil given animate form—literally evil incarnate.

Occasionally, a spellcaster may summon a fiendish creature to accomplish some task. Such an act is evil, but not terribly so. However, some characters, particularly those who worship demons or devils or see them as valuable allies, may work with (or for) fiends to further their own ends. Worse still, some mortals sell their souls to fiends in order to gain more power or support.

Creating Evil Creatures

Some villains are not content with simply consorting with, summoning, or controlling evil creatures. They feel the need to go one step further and actually create such creatures with foul experiments or evil magic.

Another way to create evil creatures is to allow the monsters themselves to remake fallen foes in their own images. For example, a bodak's victims rise the next day as new bodaks, and a werewolf can spread its evil by infecting others with lycanthropy.

Using Others for Personal Gain

Whether it's sacrificing a victim on an evil god's altar to gain a boon, or simply stealing from a friend, using others for one's own purposes is a hallmark of villainy. A villain routinely puts others in harm's way to save his or her own neck—better that others die, surely.

The utter selfishness of an evil character rarely leaves room for empathy. He is so consumed with his own goals and desires that he can think of no reason not to succeed at the expense of others.

Greed

Greed is so simple a motivation that it hardly seems worth mentioning. Yet it drives villains perhaps more than any other factor. Greed is tied into most of the types of evil behavior mentioned here. Ambition taken too far—particularly advancement at the expense of others—can manifest itself as greed.

Bullying and Cowing Innocents

Bullying is simply a symptom of an obsession with power. A villain who has power over another likes to brandish that power to prove her own might, both to herself and to others.

Although the archetypal bully is a strong and powerful thug, other kinds of bullies exist as well. Sometimes a bully uses magical might rather than physical prowess to cow those around her. Sometimes the power is political in nature.

Bringing Despair

Evil creatures often enjoy spreading pain and misery to others. Some do this because breaking the spirits of others makes them feel superior; others sow despair for the sheer joy it provides them.

A villain with a love of misery may attempt to break his foes, either instead of or before killing them. Straightforward techniques such as torture can break an enemy, and so can more elaborate schemes, such as destroying the good aspects of an enemy's life, one by one.

Tempting Others

Temping good individuals to do wrong is an evil act. Plots with this goal are largely the purview of demons and devils that seek to corrupt mortals in order to taint their souls. The products of a tempter's work are larvae, the physical manifestations of evil souls on the Lower Planes.

When evil mortals tempt other mortals, often the temptation comes in the form of a bribe to get others to do what the villain wants.

Fetishes and Addictions

Many slaves to darkness are consumed by addictions and perverted tastes. Unsavory sexual behavior, drug addiction, sadism, and masochism are just some of the horrible traits common to the evil and perverse.

Cannibalism

Cannibals are creatures that eat others of their own kind. In the broader sense, cannibals may be defined as creatures that eat other intelligent creatures for whatever perverted pleasure they gain from it.

Cannibals gain pleasure, and in some cases power, from eating others. Often cannibals consume foes that they have defeated in battle, but sometimes they simply murder their meals.

Diseases, many of which involve mental disorders, may be transmitted through cannibalism. Eating particularly foul creatures, such as trolls or fiends, can be very dangerous.

Masochism

Masochists are rarely at full hit points because they continually inflict wounds upon themselves. A masochist gets pleasure from feeling pain and sometimes can't tell the two sensations apart.

Game Mechanics:

- When encountered, a masochist has typically lost 1d3×10% of their total hit points to self-inflicted wounds
- Has advantage on saving throws against effects that deal pain or cause the frightened condition through pain
- If they take damage equal to or greater than their level (or CR) in a single round, they gain advantage on attack rolls and ability checks until the end of their next turn
- Masochists often grin with sickening glee when struck in combat

Self-Mutilation

Like masochists, self-mutilators are fascinated by harming themselves. But the pain isn't important to a self-mutilator; it's the alteration and destruction of his own flesh that fascinates him.

Characteristics:

- Turn the destruction of their own bodies into a twisted sort of art
- Often covered in patterned scars
- Sometimes insert useful mundane or magic items into their flesh
- Always has 1d3−1×10% fewer hit points than normal maximum
- Has advantage on saving throws against effects that deal pain or cause the frightened condition through pain
- Can choose to permanently reduce their hit point maximum by 10 to gain a +1 bonus to AC (this bonus does not stack with natural armor or other sources of unarmored defense)

Sadism

Sadists love to inflict pain. Generally, they hate suffering pain themselves, but a few are sadomasochists, who enjoy both giving and receiving pain.

Game Mechanics:

- Foes have advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks when they threaten a sadist with physical harm (unless the sadist is also a masochist)
- If a sadist deals damage equal to or greater than their level (or CR) in a single round, they gain advantage on attack rolls and ability checks until the end of their next turn
- Sadists laugh and lick the spray of blood across their face whenever they inflict a grievous wound

Psychopathy

Technically, a psychopath is anyone with a severe mental disorder resulting in any egocentric and antisocial behavior. For the purpose of the D&D game, however, a psychopath is someone who derives pleasure from—and in fact can become addicted to—killing.

Types of Psychopaths:

- **Sadistic Type**: Enjoys inflicting pain before killing, often sadists
- **Pure Death Type**: Interested only in death, cries of mercy or pain annoy them
- **Sexual Type**: Rapists who use forced intercourse as a means to attain power over others

Necrophilia

Among the foulest of fetishes, necrophilia is the enjoyment of sex with the dead (or in some cases the undead).

Characteristics:

- Often members of a death cult
- Servants of undead deities such as Vecna
- Followers of demon lords such as Orcus
- May have sex with corpses as part of a religious rite
- Particularly vile individuals violate the bodies of their defeated enemies

Bestiality

An individual who has the terrible fetish of bestiality desires sex with creatures of a type, shape, or intellect vastly different from his or her own.

Characteristics:

- Sometimes stems from a desire to have power over creatures of limited intelligence
- More often caused by a deviance in attraction
- Shapechangers are the most common culprits
- Evil dragons occasionally find themselves attracted to various creatures other than their own kind
- Fiends are willing to seduce or rape virtually any creature

Alcoholism/Drug Addiction

An individual addicted to the use of a particular substance is prone to erratic, violent, and sometimes self-destructive behavior.

Characteristics:

- Some addicted people reach a point at which they need the substance to function normally
- Sell off material possessions (and sometimes family members) to get the drugs they crave
- Drug addictions function much like diseases
- See Chapter 3 of this book for specific drug and addiction rules

Roleplaying Notes

When incorporating these fetishes and addictions into your campaign, consider:

- **Maturity Level**: These themes are dark and may not be appropriate for all gaming groups
- **Purpose**: These traits should serve the story and character development, not be included for shock value alone
- **Consequences**: Characters with these traits should face meaningful consequences for their actions
- **Player Comfort**: Always check with your players before introducing particularly dark themes

These elements can create compelling villains and challenging moral dilemmas when used thoughtfully and appropriately for your gaming group.

Vile Gods and Races

Vile Gods

In comparison with gods such as Erythnul and Vecna, the deities described in this section are fairly minor, with only small congregations and cults in their name. Most people speak these deities' names in fear, or not at all lest they attract a dread god's attention.

Karaan, the Beast God

Known primarily as the Beast God, Karaan is a monstrous entity of savage lust and wanton destruction. Karaan is normally depicted as a hulking humanoid covered in fur, with terrible claws and teeth. He resembles no specific animal but has a predatory appearance.

- **Alignment**: Chaotic Evil
- **Domains**: Nature, War
- **Suggested Cleric Domains**: Nature, War
- **Holy Symbol**: Bestial claw
- **Worshipers**: Lycanthropes, bugbears, gnolls, worgs, manticores, some sphinxes

Rallaster, the Razor God

Rallaster is a deity of murder, torture, and psychotic behavior. Religious scholars refer to him as the Insane God and the God of Madmen, but Rallaster's followers find him completely sane and comprehensible.

- **Alignment**: Chaotic Evil
- **Domains**: Death, Trickery
- **Suggested Cleric Domains**: Death, Trickery
- **Holy Symbol**: Tooth mouth clamped down on a bloody, razor-thin blade
- **Worshipers**: Serial killers, torturers, the insane

The Patient One, the Dark Watcher

Waiting in the darkness, the Patient One is a strange and alien creature. Always whispering secrets to itself, the Patient One waits until its time comes, and then it strikes, destroying or consuming everything in its path.

- **Alignment**: Neutral Evil
- **Domains**: Knowledge, Trickery
- **Suggested Cleric Domains**: Knowledge, Trickery
- **Holy Symbol**: Mouth surrounded by eyes, always done in dark colors

Scahrossar, Mistress of Exquisite Pain

Known by all as the Mistress of Exquisite Pain, Scahrossar is usually portrayed as a woman covered entirely in tight, studded black leather so that even her face is concealed. She is selfish, cruel, and domineering.

- **Alignment**: Lawful Evil
- **Domains**: Death, Order
- **Suggested Cleric Domains**: Death, Order
- **Holy Symbol**: Barbed whip
- **Note**: Sister of Olidammara, though they have no relationship

The Xammux

Not a single god, but an entity composed of at least six separate beings, the Xammux represents cold, analytical thinking taken to its extreme. The Xammux serves as the patron of utter indifference and of delving into forbidden knowledge.

- **Alignment**: Neutral Evil
- **Domains**: Knowledge, Arcana
- **Suggested Cleric Domains**: Knowledge, Arcana
- **Holy Symbol**: Pair of glistening, razor-sharp steel calipers

Yeathan, God of the Evil Depths

God of the evil depths, master of the last gasping breath, and lord of the deep darkness, Yeathan is a god of the sea. Once a simple water deity, Yeathan gradually brooded on darker matters until he became a neutral evil god of all things foul and malevolent about the sea.

- **Alignment**: Neutral Evil
- **Domains**: Tempest, Death
- **Suggested Cleric Domains**: Tempest, Death
- **Holy Symbol**: Dark bluish-green spiral with a black center
- **Worshipers**: Sahuagin, kuo-toa, aboleths and their skum servants

Vile Races and Cultures

Sometimes, an entire culture or race is evil. Examples of evil races can be found by examining the Monster Manual entries for drow, duergar, orcs, and mind flayers.

Vashar

There is a legend that few tell of a race known as the Vashar. Intelligent beings do not speak of the legend not only because of the darkness involved but also because of the shame.

Origin: When the gods set out to create humanity, they formed the first man and gave him life. According to the legend, the first man immediately began hunting, killed an animal, then broke one of its bones to create a weapon. He turned upon his creators and attempted to kill them. The disgusted gods destroyed him, but a demon gathered his remains and resurrected him, creating a woman as well.

Characteristics:

- All Vasharans are born out of rape, anger, and pain
- They understand only hate, selfishness, and greed
- Their ultimate goal is deicide - killing the gods that created them
- They do not understand concepts such as mercy, kindness, or love
- They show no revulsion for creatures or acts that other humans find repellent

Racial Traits (5e):

- **Creature Type.** Humanoid
- **Size.** Medium (base walking speed 30 feet)
- **Ability Score Increase.** +2 to one ability score of your choice, +1 to another
- **Born of Malice.** You gain one Vile feat of your choice at 1st level (you must meet any prerequisites)
- **Ruthless Cunning.** You gain proficiency in one skill of your choice
- **Languages.** Common plus one language of your choice

Jerren

Jerren are halflings, although they despise that name. About two hundred years ago, the Jerren were typical nomadic halflings until beset by goblins and bugbears. In desperation, they turned to corrupt magic and terrible poisons to win the war.

Characteristics:

- Ruled by strength and blood lust
- Nomadic lifestyle, preying upon others for food and goods
- Always angry, bitter, and savage
- Always sadists and often masochists as well
- Covered with ritual scars and self-inflicted wounds

Racial Traits (5e):

- **Creature Type.** Humanoid
- **Size.** Small (base walking speed 25 feet)
- **Ability Score Increase.** +2 Dexterity, +1 Constitution
- **Savage Intimidation.** You have proficiency in the Intimidation and Deception skills
- **Jerren Resilience.** You have advantage on saving throws against being frightened
- **Vicious Accuracy.** You have proficiency with thrown weapons. When you make a ranged attack with a thrown weapon, you can add your proficiency bonus to the damage roll once per turn
- **Stealthy.** You have proficiency in the Stealth skill
- **Languages.** Common and Halfling. You can also speak one of the following: Infernal, Abyssal, or Goblin

The Book of Vile Darkness

The original book of vile darkness was a scroll penned by a Vasharan spellcaster millennia ago. It contained his wicked thoughts and the terrible knowledge that he had gained through experimentation and study. Years later, the scroll was discovered by a cleric of Nerull. She added to it, tripling its length by recording her knowledge of dark gods, sacrifice, and evil divine magic.

Eventually the collected works fell into the hands of a genocidal wizard and warlord named Vecna. He took the scrolls and added some of his own discoveries to them. After he died and rose as a lich, Vecna transcribed the scrolls into a bound book, creating its cover from the flesh of a human face and the bones of a demon, magically transformed into a dull metal binding.

The book is a fantastic reference work of evil deities, black magic, sacrifice, and forbidden secrets. Its lore is so potent and so dark that nonevil creatures that read its contents are often corrupted to evil through defilement rather than temptation.

Creating Villains

If you understand evil, you can create villains with appropriate personalities and motives. The following examples detail some villains whose activities reflect the aspects of evil described above.

Villain Archetypes

The Boorish Thug

Perhaps the simplest sort of villain is the crude, selfish oaf who just takes what he wants. His desires rarely go beyond simple wealth or privilege, although he might crave something as significant as respect.

Characteristics:

- Straightforward and unsophisticated
- Uses brute force rather than subtle methods
- Allies are usually just like him
- Cowardly, lazy, and crude
- Not particularly skilled at fighting

Example: Trendan Resh (NE male human, roughly equivalent to a CR 3 **thug** or **bandit captain**) is a criminal who has lived all his life in the big city. Since his youth, Trendan has run a small gang of other young toughs. They would rather waylay visitors to the city or steal from the drunks in the alleyways behind Tavern Row.

The Tyrant

The classic power-mad villain craves domination over all that he sees—lands, people, and magic. He can be a ruler, a would-be ruler, or a loner who desires physical domination more than political power.

Characteristics:

- Believes he is superior to others
- Uses minions to accomplish goals
- Schemes are usually sophisticated (though not always smart)
- Can range from petty megalomaniac to bookish wizard seeking world domination

Example: Ystan the Graylord (CE male dwarf, roughly equivalent to a CR 12 **archmage**) seeks to take over the area around Mount Exalt through the use of his undead minions. He carries a special item called the *skull of past splendor*, which functions as a *rod of splendor* and confers memories, granting advantage on Intelligence (Arcana) and Intelligence (History) checks.

The Scheming Liar

The slippery weasel, the cunning thief, the silver-tongued rogue—these villains present different dangers than brutes and psychopaths do, but they are dangerous foes nonetheless.

Characteristics:

- Prefer subtle methods over direct confrontation
- Spin webs of deceit wherever they go
- Know just what to say and who to say it to
- Often political manipulators who use laws to work for them
- Difficult to defeat and even harder to prove villainous

Example: Narma Glitterhome (CE female gnome, roughly equivalent to a CR 6 **mage**) serves as a butler to Lord Feddin Spritestar. She has the lord's ear and frequently gives him advice about rulership. In reality, she manipulates him toward war with kobold tribes while planning to emerge as a "savior" queen.

The Psychopath

Some villains focus on the act of evil itself, rather than on the goals an evil act helps them reach. They revel in killing, inflicting pain, and spreading misery.

Characteristics:

- Born psychopathic creatures (lamias, destrachans, orcs, beholders, black dragons)
- Humanoid psychopaths vary from clean and efficient to blatant and direct
- Often have positions of power that keep others from stopping them
- Love killing for its own sake

Example: Reynod (NE male human **vampire**, with the skills of an **assassin**) is the henchman of a powerful criminal overlord. He delights in killing and owns a collection of more than three hundred knives. He is sneaky, subtle, and sly. His victims rarely know what is coming because he is so efficient at shadowing his prey.

The Sophisticate

A villain can be a horrible murderer or a lying cheat and yet still retain a veneer of sophistication. This type of villain can be a foppish rogue without a conscience or a dispassionate overlord who enjoys fine elven wines while watching executions.

Characteristics:

- Often the evildoers no one suspects
- Able to convince most people they are noble and civilized
- May be known for what they truly are but still consider themselves cultured
- Commit atrocities while maintaining sophisticated demeanor

Example: Duchess Winsone D'Artreda (LE female human **noble**, CR 10+) rules over a vast, wooded realm. All know her as beautiful, well-mannered, and sophisticated. Unknown to most, she is also a sadist and cold-blooded killer with secret torture chambers in her castle.

The Misguided Fool

Some villains do not even know that they are villains. Deluded through insanity, religious belief, or just stupidity, they commit horrible acts and never realize what they do.

Characteristics:

- Deluded about their own nature
- May suspect their acts are tainted but too apathetic to investigate
- Blindly commit evil because it's easier
- Can become truly sinister over time as perceptions veer from reality

Example: Nerence Unger (NE male human **commoner/noble**, low CR) leads a school for young boys. Every few months, men give him gold and one boy marked as a "troublemaker" disappears. Nerence says nothing and tells himself he did nothing wrong.

The Monster

The monster villain craves killing, lives in filth, and seeks to destroy everything that he encounters. More depraved than psychopaths or sadists, this creature is beyond redemption.

Characteristics:

- Practically a demon or devil in their own right
- Drinks blood of enemies and lets it run down chin
- No act too distasteful

- Even their own tribe fears them

Example: Agrattanath (LE male **hobgoblin warlord**, roughly CR 8) kills his foes with impunity but really enjoys killing the children of his dead foes slowly and then feasting on their quivering hearts. He wields a mace whose head is the petrified head of an elflord.

The Unexpected Villain

Sometimes evil doesn't show up where your players expect it. A trusted servant can abuse his position, a cleric of Pelor might be a werewolf, or the respected healer is in the pay of slavers.

Characteristics:

- Often belongs to another villainous category
- May be obviously evil with more beneath the surface
- Could be possessed or polymorphed
- Creates betrayal and shock when revealed

Example: Taetra Featherfall (CE female elf **cambion** or **half-fiend**) seems like a normal elf child in the village of Daerthane. She is actually the shadowchild—a being born with supernatural talent and intelligence, with the mind of a dispassionate killer and many special powers. Use the **cambion** stat block from the *Monster Manual* as a starting point, adjusted for her elven heritage.

Developing Your Villains

When creating villains for your campaign:

1. **Choose an Archetype**: Start with one of the basic types
2. **Add Motivation**: What drives them? Greed, power, revenge, ideology?
3. **Give Them Resources**: Magic items, minions, wealth, influence
4. **Create Weaknesses**: Hubris, specific fears, moral blind spots
5. **Connect to Players**: Make their schemes affect the PCs directly
6. **Plan Escalation**: How do they react when thwarted? Do they get more desperate, more cunning, or flee?

The best villains are those that players love to hate—challenging obstacles that make victory feel meaningful.

Example Villains

The following villains can be adapted for most D&D 5e campaigns. They utilize many of the feats, subclass options, spells, magic items, and new rules found in this book.

The Dread Emperor

One of the most arresting figures anywhere is the Dread Emperor. This striking human male stands 6 1/2 feet tall. He wears golden plate armor and a long red cloak, and he carries a mirrored shield, although he bears no weapons. What is most shocking is that he walks about with four children in tow, each wearing an iron collar chained to his armor. The children shuffle behind the Dread Emperor as if in a stupor—they do not appear to be treated well.

No one knows this man's real name. The Dread Emperor claims to be the Emperor of the World. Although this claim isn't true, the Dread Emperor is extremely powerful. Anyone who tells him that he doesn't rule all he surveys is likely to be dead soon.

Aside from the four children (and it's not always the same four children) chained to his armor, the Dread Emperor keeps to himself. His lonely (but well-warded) fortress is located on the Ethereal Plane, accessible via a hidden portal in a high mountain cave. Occasionally the Dread Emperor comes to a city to sell a magic item he has created, but he keeps to the shadier parts of town because only the most depraved are willing to deal with him. Upstanding, moral people often attempt to rescue the children, so the Dread Emperor has to kill the do-gooders and usually destroy a few city blocks in the process.

The Dread Emperor sometimes bargains for some bit of information, a magic item, or a spell. Those who study him claim that his sole motivation is to gather more personal magical power for himself, at any cost. He has been particularly interested in defensive items lately.

The Dread Emperor is clearly insane, but his isn't the cackling, madcap sort of insanity. He is delusional, paranoid, and psychotic. He does not delight in the suffering of others, but he has not an ounce of compassion or empathy. If left alone, the Dread Emperor is content to keep to himself and remain unobtrusive. However, the children he keeps in tow often tempt would-be heroes to attack him, so he sometimes finds himself in battle when he moves among other people. When that happens, he does not hesitate to kill hundreds in the process of slaying a single target. One of his favorite tactics is to cast haste on himself and follow that with meteor swarm, a corrupted maximized fireball, and a corrupted quickened fireball all in a single round. Another favorite tactic is to use mass charm to get any and all bystanders on his side while some hero or constable attempts to accost him. He sometimes charms his assailants as well, although they are usually found dead later even if they were charmed into submission.

Tactics

- Opens combat with *haste* on himself, then *meteor swarm* and a quickened *fireball* empowered with his Diabolism feature
- Uses *mass suggestion* or *dominate person* to turn bystanders into allies
- Not afraid to kill hundreds in the process of slaying a single target
- Uses his mirrored shield to reflect spells back at casters
- Will sacrifice his chained children if it provides a tactical advantage

Stat Block

The Dread Emperor
Medium Humanoid (Human), Lawful Evil

Armor Class 20 (*+1 plate armor, shield of reflecting*)
Hit Points 150 (20d8 + 60)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	22 (+6)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Int +12, Wis +8
Skills Arcana +12, Deception +7, Intimidation +13, Perception +8
Senses passive Perception 18
Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elvish, Giant, Goblin, Halfling, Infernal, Sylvan, Undercommon
Challenge 20 (25,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +6

Diabolism (4/Day). When the Dread Emperor casts a spell that targets at least one creature other than himself, he can infuse it with unholy power. The spell deals an extra 3d6 necrotic damage to any good-aligned creature affected by it.

Vile Diabolism. When using Diabolism, the Dread Emperor can choose to convert the extra necrotic damage into vile damage (half the amount, but it reduces the target's hit point maximum by the same amount until the target finishes a long rest).

Imp Familiar. The Dread Emperor has an imp familiar. The imp has AC 16, 52 hit points, and can use the Help action as a bonus action on the Emperor's turn.

Spellcasting. The Dread Emperor is a 20th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 20, +12 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following wizard spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, *mage hand*, *minor illusion*, *prestidigitation*, *shocking grasp*
- 1st level (4 slots): *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *thunderwave*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *hold person*, *mirror image*, *misty step*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fireball*, *haste*
- 4th level (3 slots): *banishment*, *dimension door*, *wall of fire*
- 5th level (3 slots): *dominate person*, *wall of force*, *cone of cold*
- 6th level (2 slots): *chain lightning*, *mass suggestion*
- 7th level (2 slots): *finger of death*, *forcecage*
- 8th level (1 slot): *power word stun*
- 9th level (1 slot): *meteor swarm*

Possessions: *+1 plate armor* (the Armor of the Dread Emperor), *shield of missile attraction* (reskinned as reflecting shield), *ring of protection +2*, *amulet of health*, *headband of intellect* (set to 22), *wand of fireballs* (7 charges), 2 *potions of greater healing*, evil spell components.

Siddal and Gauderis

Siddal, a medusa cancer mage, and Gauderis, a half-orc vermin lord, have formed a strange alliance. They live in an isolated cave complex teeming with insects, worms, and all manner of other vermin, as well as an otyugh. These two, working together, are attempting to develop new, more virulent strains of existing diseases, in the hope of spreading them throughout civilization. Although originally they sought to spread disease in order to drive back encroaching farm communities, their work is now for pure psychopathic pleasure. A visitor must make an appropriate saving throw to avoid infection with a random disease for every round spent in their caves.

Siddal

Background: Siddal felt the Calling (see the Calling section in Chapter 2) and returned with a flesheater rod, the knowledge she needed to become a cancer mage, and a taste for masochism and self-mutilation. Driven away by her four sisters, who found her repulsive even by their standards, Siddal eventually found a kindred soul in Gauderis. She keeps her gaze attack from harming him or the vermin and rat servants in the caves by wearing a veil. Even so, Siddal does not hesitate to put her allies at risk if it might save her from some threat.

Siddal
Medium Monstrosity, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 97 (13d8 + 39)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Con +7, Wis +6
Skills Perception +6, Stealth +8, Survival +6, Medicine +6
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Common
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +4

Petrifying Gaze. When a creature that can see Siddal's eyes starts its turn within 30 feet of her, Siddal can force it to make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw if she isn't incapacitated and can see the creature. On a failure, the creature is restrained and must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn. On a success, the effect ends. On a failure, the creature is petrified.

Disease Host. Siddal is immune to disease but is a carrier of every disease she has encountered. A creature that touches her or is hit by her melee attacks must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or contract a disease of the DM's choice.

Cancerous Companion. A semi-sentient tumor within Siddal has blindsight out to 30 feet. It can alert Siddal to unseen threats, granting her advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks. Once per day, it can cast one of Siddal's innate spells on its own.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Siddal deals an extra 2d6 damage when she hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Siddal.

Actions

Multiattack. Siddal makes two attacks: one with her dagger and one with her snake hair.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage.

Snake Hair. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage plus 14 (4d6) poison damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Gauderis

Background: Gauderis is secretly in love with Siddal in all her diseased glory. He believes there is a secret ecstasy in being petrified by her gaze and longs for it. For now, Gauderis tries to prove his worth to Siddal by developing new diseases and helping her spread them throughout the land.

Gauderis
Medium Humanoid (Half-Orc), Neutral Evil

Armor Class 17 (chitin armor, natural armor)
Hit Points 105 (14d8 + 42)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +9, Wis +7
Skills Nature +5, Medicine +7, Perception +7, Survival +7
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Common, Orc, Druidic
Challenge 14 (11,500 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +5

Spellcasting. Gauderis is a 7th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following druid spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft*, *infestation*, *poison spray*
- 1st level (4 slots): *entangle*, *fog cloud*, *thunderwave*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *hold person*, *spike growth*, *spider climb*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *conjure animals*, *plant growth*, *stinking cloud*
- 4th level (1 slot): *giant insect*, *blight*

Wild Shape (2/Short Rest). Gauderis can use his action to magically assume the shape of a beast with CR 1 or lower.

Blood Drain. When Gauderis hits a creature with a melee attack, he can choose to grapple the target (escape DC 17). While grappled, the target takes 7 (2d6) necrotic damage at the start of each of its turns as insectlike mandibles drain its blood.

Chitin Armor. Gauderis's skin is covered in a chitinous layer that grants him a base AC of 15 (his Dexterity modifier is added).

Actions

Multiattack. Gauderis makes two attacks with his club.

+1 Club of Sapping. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or have its Strength score reduced by 1d4 until it finishes a long rest.

Spew Vermin (Recharge 5–6). Gauderis sprays a swarm of biting vermin in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in the area must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 28 (8d6) piercing damage on a failed save, or half as much on a success.

Wings of the Vermin (1/Day). Gauderis grows insectoid wings, gaining a flying speed of 30 feet for 1 hour.

Enesstrere, the Demon-Possessed Dragon

Enesstrere was a typical blue dragon living an ordinary blue dragon life until Ykkandri, a demon, possessed him. The first thing Ykkandri did was force Enesstrere to ingest the drug luhix and succumb to its addictive effects.

Background: Ykkandri is a glabrezu who shed his physical form to travel as a possessor demon. After possessing Enesstrere, he uses the dragon as an experiment to test his abilities. Recently, Ykkandri flew to a nearby monastery, sacked it, and killed all the monks inside. The monastery has become a secret base for demons, and rumors of a demonic invasion are circulating.

Current Activities: Ykkandri is biding his time, using the dragon as a potential spearhead for a demonic army. A quasit brings Enesstrere one dose of luhix each day.

Stat Block

Use the **ancient blue dragon** stat block from the *Monster Manual* (CR 23) with the following modifications to represent Ykkandri's possession:

Enesstrere (Possessed Ancient Blue Dragon)
Gargantuan Dragon, Lawful Evil (possessed by a Chaotic Evil glabrezu)

Use the standard **Ancient Blue Dragon** stat block with these additions:

Demonic Possession. Enesstrere is possessed by Ykkandri, a glabrezu. While possessed, the dragon has the following additional traits:

- **Magic Resistance.** Enesstrere has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.
- **Demonic Influence.** Enesstrere can cast *darkness*, *confusion*, and *dispel magic* each once per day (no components required), using Charisma as his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 19).
- **Dual Mind.** Enesstrere has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or having the possession ended. Any creature attempting to end the possession must succeed on a DC 21 Charisma check.

Drug Addiction (Luhix). Enesstrere is addicted to the drug luhix. If he does not receive a dose within 24 hours, he has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks until he receives one. A quasit delivers one dose daily.

Additional Spells. In addition to the ancient blue dragon's normal spellcasting, Enesstrere knows the following spells from this book: *no light* (cantrip), *extract drug* (1st level), *entice gift* (2nd level), *reality blind* (3rd level).

Exorcising Ykkandri. Casting *dispel evil and good* (banishment option) on Enesstrere forces Ykkandri to make a DC 17 Charisma saving throw. On a failure, the demon is expelled. Alternatively, killing the dragon releases the demon in its glabrezu form.

Using These Villains

These villains provide excellent templates for creating your own custom evil NPCs. When using them:

1. **Scale to Your Party**: Adjust hit points, damage, and spell selections to match your party's level
2. **Leverage Unique Traits**: Each villain has signature abilities — lean into those for memorable encounters
3. **Layer the Encounter**: Pair villains with minions, environmental hazards, and lair actions
4. **Foreshadow**: Let players hear rumors and encounter evidence of these villains before the final confrontation
5. **Consequences**: These villains should leave lasting marks on the campaign world

Designer's Note: The stat blocks above are converted from the original 3.5e source material. DMs should feel free to adjust CR, hit points, and abilities to suit their campaign's needs. The *Monster Manual* and *Dungeon Master's Guide* provide guidelines for creating and modifying NPC stat blocks.

Malign Sites

Below are two examples of terrible places that you can use in your campaign. These locations carry the taint of evil and can serve as excellent adventure sites or ongoing sources of conflict.

The Azure Vale

When the warlord-wizard Lahm the Obsessor sacked Faenish-Kul, he captured all the citizens of the city and gave one to each of his orc and ogre servants. He commanded each warrior to kill his prisoner on his signal. On that day, nine

thousand people all died at once, at the whim of one man.

Lahm committed this vile act simply because he could. His armies moved on and eventually met defeat, but the area around Faenish-Kul, known as the Azure Vale, has never been the same.

Characteristics

This place of lasting evil has since been home to strange, extremely pale plants, and the whole area has an unnatural chill that lasts even through the hot summer months.

Anyone who spends the night in the mist-shrouded valley hears faint whispers and sometimes even moans. His or her dreams are filled with nightmares of murder and hate.

Supernatural Elements

The Azure Vale is haunted by the spirits of nine thousand ghosts. Every person slain by the legions of Lahm remains here—and they all want vengeance upon the living.

Effects on Visitors:

- Hear whispers and moans throughout the night
- Experience nightmares of murder and hate
- Risk attack from the vengeful spirits
- May be driven mad by the collective psychic trauma

Adventure Hooks

The Azure Vale attracts adventurers despite its dangers:

The Amulet of Lahm: A powerful artifact, the *Amulet of Lahm*, is said to lie amid the pale trees, lost in the confusion of that fateful night. Among its other powers, the amulet grants its wearer regeneration (the wearer regains 10 hit points at the start of each of their turns if they have at least 1 hit point, and this regeneration is suppressed for 1 round if the wearer takes acid or fire damage) and increases their Strength score by 4, to a maximum of 24. The amulet requires attunement and is a legendary item.

Quest Opportunities:

- Retrieve the amulet for a patron
- Lay the spirits to rest
- Investigate the source of the lingering evil
- Protect nearby settlements from the spreading corruption

Environmental Effects

- The entire vale is considered desecrated ground (as if under the effect of a *hallow* spell with the *fear* option). Creatures within the vale have disadvantage on Wisdom saving throws against being frightened.
- Undead within the vale have advantage on saving throws against features that turn undead.
- A creature that finishes a long rest in the vale must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or gain no benefit from the rest, plagued by nightmares of murder and hate.
- The spirits manifest as **specters**, **wraiths**, or **ghosts** (use the stat blocks from the *Monster Manual*). On any given night, 2d6 such spirits may be encountered.

The Goblin Pits of Io-Rach

Kezzerug is a goblin chief who rules the large tribe known as the Io-Rach (which in Goblin means something very close to "bloody eye lying on the ground"). When Kezzerug's warriors met defeat at the hands of a small band of elves, he decided that something needed to be done.

The Process

Kezzerug commanded the tribe's three adepts to begin working on a magical way to improve the puissance of the Io-Rach tribe. After years of trial and error, they hit upon a plan.

After filling large pits with alchemical mixtures, the Io-Rach tribe lowers its warriors on harnesses into the brew for as long as the goblins can stand it. When a goblin is brought out of the pit, he spends the next few days undergoing an agonizing change.

Results:

- One-quarter of such warriors die a howling death
- Each of the others grows to Medium size
- Their Strength and Constitution scores each increase by 4 (to a maximum of 22)
- Their Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores each decrease by 4 (to a minimum of 3)
- They become misshapen, lumbering mutants with twisted limbs, bulbous eyes, and festering sores

Use the **goblin** stat block with the following changes: size becomes Medium, Strength becomes 12 (+1), Constitution becomes 14 (+2), Intelligence becomes 6 (−2), Wisdom becomes 4 (−3), Charisma becomes 4 (−3). Hit points increase to 18 (4d8). AC becomes 13 (natural armor). They lose Nimble Escape. CR increases to 1 (200 XP).

Expansion

After creating a large number of these twisted goblins, the adepts began experimenting on other captured creatures. None of the experiments have been as successful as the goblin warriors, but the pits have spawned many strange creatures—and the progeny of those that are capable of reproduction are even stranger.

Current Situation

In this way, the Io-Rach tribe has amassed great power. Its underground lair has spread, and the pits are now innumerable. Terrible, twisted things roam those caves, and goblin marauders scour the countryside for the alchemical ingredients needed for the procedures, including such items as human brains and blood.

Adventure Hooks

Stopping the Experiments: Players might be hired to stop the goblins' experiments, either to protect nearby communities or to rescue captured victims.

Investigating the Pits: The strange creatures emerging from the pits could threaten nearby settlements, prompting an investigation.

Gathering Ingredients: The goblins' need for specific ingredients (human brains, blood) could lead them to raid player characters' communities.

The Source: Who taught the goblins these techniques? Was it a evil wizard, a demon, or something worse?

The Alchemical Process

A creature submerged in the pits must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw at the end of each hour of submersion. On a failure, the creature takes 22 (4d10) poison damage. On a success, the creature takes half damage. After 8 hours of submersion, the creature must make a final DC 18 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creature dies. On a success, the transformation takes hold over the next 1d4 days.

The three Io-Rach adepts are **goblin shamans** (use the **druid** stat block with CR 2, adjusted for goblin traits, with access to spells like *poison spray*, *ray of sickness*, *protection from poison*, and *contagion*).

Using Malign Sites in Your Campaign

When incorporating these locations:

1. **Scale Appropriately**: Adjust the power level to match your party
2. **Create Stakes**: Make the evil location threaten something the players care about
3. **Multiple Solutions**: Allow for combat, negotiation, stealth, and creative problem-solving
4. **Lingering Effects**: The sites should have lasting impacts on characters and the world
5. **Expansion Opportunities**: Use these as bases for larger campaigns or adventure arcs

These malign sites provide excellent backdrops for horror-themed adventures and can serve as recurring locations throughout a campaign.

Chapter 2: Variant Rules

Possession

Some fiends with a Challenge Rating of 4 or higher and a Charisma score of at least 13 have the ability to shuck their physical forms and take on an ethereal form that allows them to possess another creature or an object.

Possessed Creatures

The Process

A fiend's ethereal form must be within 5 feet of its desired target. A creature under the effect of *protection from evil and good* is immune to possession attempts. An unprotected target must succeed on a **Charisma saving throw** (DC = 8 + the fiend's proficiency bonus + the fiend's Charisma modifier) to avoid possession.

Modifiers:

- Evil-aligned targets have disadvantage on this saving throw
- Targets currently committing an evil act automatically fail

Once a creature succeeds on this save, that fiend cannot attempt to possess that creature again for 24 hours.

Possession Roles

A fiend possessing a creature can take one of four roles. Switching between roles requires no action but can only be done once per round, at the start of the fiend's turn.

Rider

The fiend simply rides along with the victim, who is usually unaware. The fiend can perceive through the host's senses. While riding, the fiend is undetectable by any means short of a *wish* spell or similar magic.

Ally

If the possessed creature is aware and willing, the fiend can grant the possessed creature a +2 bonus to any single ability score (to a maximum of 24). The fiend can remove this bonus at will if the creature behaves contrary to its wishes.

Controller

The fiend can attempt direct control over the victim's actions. At the start of each of the victim's turns, the victim must succeed on a **Charisma saving throw** (same DC as the initial possession, +1 for each previous failed save that day) or be controlled by the fiend for that turn. While struggling against control, the victim's speed is halved and it has disadvantage on attack rolls.

If the possessed creature succeeds on three consecutive saving throws, the fiend cannot make further attempts to control the victim that day.

Enemy

The opposite of an ally — the fiend imposes a −2 penalty to any single ability score of the victim (to a minimum of 1). The fiend can remove this penalty at will, sometimes after telepathic negotiation.

Possessed Objects

A fiend can possess an object of at least Tiny size and no larger than Huge. An item held, worn, or carried by a character uses its owner's Charisma saving throw to resist possession.

Object Roles

A fiend possessing an object can take these roles:

Watcher

The fiend possesses a stationary object and gains blindsight out to 120 feet while inside it.

Controller

If the object has moving parts, the fiend can control the movement. Fiends of CR 10 or higher with Charisma 17+ can animate even objects without moving parts, using the **animated armor** or **flying sword** stat block as appropriate.

Corruptor

The possessed item radiates a cursed presence. Any creature that touches it must succeed on a **Wisdom saving throw** (same DC as the fiend's possession DC) or be affected as though by the *bestow curse* spell. The fiend chooses the curse effect.

Enhancer

The fiend can enhance a weapon or armor, granting it magical properties. The item's rarity cannot exceed the following based on the fiend's CR:

Fiend CR	Maximum Item Rarity
4–8	Uncommon
9–13	Rare
14–18	Very Rare
19+	Legendary

The fiend controls these properties and can suppress or remove them if the user doesn't act as desired.

Ending Possession

Possession can be ended by:

- Casting *dispel evil and good* (banishment option) on the possessed creature or object
- Reducing the host creature to 0 hit points (the fiend is expelled in ethereal form)
- A successful *remove curse* cast at a spell slot level equal to or higher than the fiend's CR divided by 4 (minimum 3rd level)
- The fiend voluntarily leaving

Using Possession in Campaigns

Possession can create excellent plot hooks:

- **Mystery**: Characters must determine who is possessed
- **Rescue**: Free an important NPC from fiendish control
- **Investigation**: Track down a possessing fiend to its source
- **Moral Dilemma**: Deal with a possessed innocent who cannot be easily freed

Possession works best as a long-term plot element rather than a simple combat mechanic, building tension and mystery over multiple sessions.

Sacrifice

Most evil gods and fiends demand sacrifice. When they say sacrifice, they mean the sacrifice of a living, intelligent creature. The main criteria are that the creature be alive and have an Intelligence score of 3 or higher.

Designer's Note: 5e doesn't have an XP-cost crafting system like 3.5e. The "dark craft" rewards have been reimagined as a downtime-based system where sacrificial energy reduces the gold cost and time required to craft evil magic items, keeping the mechanical weight without relying on a defunct system.

What is a Sacrifice?

Sacrifice is the offering of the life of a sentient being to an evil deity or powerful fiend. The victim is trussed, tied, or otherwise immobilized so that a ceremony may be conducted that culminates with the murder. In many rituals, blood is a sacred symbol of life. When that blood spills during the ritual murder of an innocent creature, the blood (and sometimes even the soul of the creature) is dedicated to a nether power of malevolence.

The sacrifice must be made in a ritualized manner. It's fine for an Oathbreaker paladin to say that he is dedicating every foe he slays to Vecna, but in truth, Vecna appreciates and rewards his followers for victims killed in a ceremony and at a place dedicated to him. This means that the ritual takes time, and it probably involves extra participants and unholy trappings.

Sacrifice Reward System

The reward a servant of an evil god gets for making a living sacrifice depends on many factors. The primary factor is the **Intelligence (Religion) check** result of the character performing the sacrifice. Each of the other factors is represented as a modifier to the check.

Sacrifice Elements

Base DC: 15 (minimum)

Modifiers:

- Conducted in a ceremony lasting at least an hour: +1
- Conducted on an altar: +2
- Conducted in a desecrated area (under *hallow* with an evil effect): +1
- Conducted in an area under the *forbiddance* spell: +2
- Conducted in the presence of a creature important to the deity: +2
- Conducted publicly: +1
- Conducted before more than 10 followers: +1
- Conducted before more than 100 followers: +1
- Sacrifice is tortured for 1 day prior to death: +1
- Sacrifice loses extremities to hungry demon prior to death: +1
- Sacrifice is good-aligned: +1
- Sacrifice is pure or virginal: +1
- Sacrifice is CR 1–5 or levels 1–5: +1
- Sacrifice is CR 6–10 or levels 6–10: +2
- Sacrifice is CR 11–15 or levels 11–15: +3
- Sacrifice is CR 16+ or levels 16+: +4
- Sacrifice is a cleric of another god: +2
- Sacrifice is a race or creature type hated by the deity: +1
- Sacrifice is willing, but duped or controlled: +1
- Sacrifice is genuinely willing: +3

Typical Sacrificial Rewards

The celebrant's deity or patron grants one reward from the appropriate tier. The DM chooses the reward or allows the celebrant to petition for a specific one.

Check Result	Reward
15	*Aid* on the celebrant for 24 hours (no concentration)
15	*Enhance ability* on the celebrant for 24 hours (no concentration)
15	Celebrant gains 10 temporary hit points for 24 hours
20	*Bless* on the celebrant and up to 5 witnesses for 24 hours (no concentration)
20	*Protection from energy* (one type, celebrant's choice) for 24 hours (no concentration)
20	Celebrant gains +2 bonus to AC for 24 hours
25	A fiend of CR 5 or lower appears and serves the celebrant for 1 hour per level/CR of the victim

Check Result	Reward
25	Celebrant's armor or robes gain a +2 bonus to AC for 24 hours
25	*Holy aura* (evil version) on the celebrant for 24 hours (no concentration)
30	Celebrant's weapon becomes a *+3 weapon* for 24 hours
30	*Enhance ability* on up to 10 witnesses for 24 hours (no concentration)
30	A fiend of CR 10 or lower appears and serves the celebrant for 1 hour per level/CR of the victim
30	Celebrant gains Magic Resistance (advantage on saves vs. spells) for 24 hours
35	A fiend of CR 15 or lower appears and serves the celebrant for 1 hour per level/CR of the victim
35	All witnesses (up to 20) gain +2 AC and *bless* for 24 hours
40	The deity grants the effect of a *wish* spell (limited to duplicating a spell of 8th level or lower)
40	Celebrant's weapon and up to 10 other weapons become *+3 weapons* for 24 hours
45	*Control weather* as directed by the celebrant for 24 hours
50	The deity grants a full *wish* spell (this happens only once for any given individual)

Dark Craft Rewards

In addition to the above, a sacrifice can generate **dark craft resources** — spiritual currency that can be used to create evil magic items.

Check Result	Dark Craft Reward
15+	Reduces crafting time for one evil magic item by 1 workweek
20+	Reduces gold cost for one evil magic item by 100 gp
25+	Reduces gold cost by 250 gp
30+	Reduces gold cost by 500 gp
35+	Reduces gold cost by 1,000 gp

Dark craft rewards have no physical manifestation, but the celebrant senses their presence like a shadow on the soul. Only one sacrifice's dark craft rewards can be applied to a single magic item's creation. When the celebrant completes a magic item using dark craft resources, the item is tainted with evil. Others can sense this evil, as described for an object of lasting evil (see Chapter 2: Evil Effects).

Sacrifice as a Requirement

Sometimes a deity demands a sacrifice to avoid divine punishment. An evil god might demand a sacrifice from a disobedient cleric before granting access to spells above 3rd level. Periodic sacrifices might also be required to power a temple's defense system, such as an *antimagic field*, *wall of force*, or a unique *forbiddance* or *hallow* effect.

Typically, the Intelligence (Religion) check DC for such required sacrifices is 25, and no other reward is forthcoming for conducting the evil ritual.

Using Sacrifice in Campaigns

Sacrifice can drive powerful storylines:

- **Moral Choices**: Players might need to decide whether to perform a sacrifice to prevent greater evil
- **Investigation**: Tracking down missing people who are being taken for sacrifices
- **Cult Plotting**: Disrupting sacrifice ceremonies before they're completed
- **Divine Politics**: Different evil gods competing for sacrifice followers

Sacrifice works best as a significant plot element rather than a common occurrence, maintaining its horror and impact when it does appear.

Curses

Curses are an important type of evil magic. Although good- or neutral-aligned characters sometimes use curses to strike at their enemies, curses are usually the domain of spiteful and malicious creatures.

Designer's Note: 5e's *bestow curse* spell is intentionally open-ended at higher levels, inviting DMs to create custom curse effects. This section provides a curated list of alternative curse effects that fit within 5e's design philosophy — powerful enough to be memorable, specific enough to drive adventures.

Alternative Curses

When a spellcaster uses *bestow curse*, the following curses can be substituted for those given in the spell description. These are appropriate for a 3rd-level casting or higher:

- Target is rendered sterile
- The next person introduced to the target for the first time will hate them uncontrollably forever
- Each time the target attempts to use the Help action, there is a 50% chance the attempt fails and the ally has disadvantage instead
- Target is struck blind and deaf (as the *blindness/deafness* spell, but both effects simultaneously)
- Each round in combat, there is a 25% chance that the target must use its action to attack the nearest creature rather than choosing an opponent normally
- Every time the victim rolls a natural 20 on a d20, it counts as a natural 1 instead
- The victim effectively ages, moving them to the beginning of the next age category
- At some point within the next week, thieves are able to steal all monetary wealth the victim has
- Beasts refuse to be within 5 feet of the target and do not respond to the target's commands (Animal Handling checks automatically fail)
- Each time the target meets someone for the first time, there is a 50% chance that the new person will confuse the target with a hated enemy, a well-known criminal, or a raving lunatic
- All creatures of a specific kind (such as orcs, owlbears, or black dragons) are permanently invisible to the sight of the victim

Greater Curse Alternatives

The following effects are appropriate for *bestow curse* cast at 7th level or higher, or for other powerful curse effects at the DM's discretion:

- A random friend or family member of the target contracts a disease. If the disease is magically cured or runs its course, another loved one contracts a new disease
- The target's most powerful and/or cherished magic item loses all magical properties permanently
- Valuable metals (such as platinum, gold, silver, and copper) turn to lead in the target's possession, even if they are in a *bag of holding* or stored away
- 1d4+1 of the target's loved ones or allies are affected by a curse chosen from the *bestow curse* list above
- All of the target's loved ones and allies suddenly despise them (their attitude becomes hostile)
- The target cannot cast spells, use innate spellcasting, or activate magic items that require command words or charges

The Dying Curse

When a particularly vile creature dies, it often speaks a final curse upon those that wronged it (usually, the characters who killed it). The effect of the dying curse depends on the level or Challenge Rating of the creature bestowing the curse.

CR or Level	Effect
1–4	Nothing
5–8	As *bestow curse* (3rd level)
9–12	As *bestow curse* (7th level), or up to four *bestow curse* effects (3rd level each)
13–16	As *wish* (limited to duplicating a spell of 8th level or lower), or up to four greater curses, or up to ten standard curses
17–20	As *wish*, or up to ten greater curses, or up to twenty-five standard curses
21+	DM's discretion

A dying curse requires no components and takes effect immediately. The target must be a creature the dying creature can see within 60 feet. The target can attempt a **Wisdom saving throw** (DC = 8 + the dying creature's proficiency bonus + its Charisma modifier) to resist the curse. On a success, the curse has no effect.

Removing a Dying Curse

Lifting a dying curse requires more than a simple *remove curse* spell if the dying creature had a CR or level of 10 or higher. A *wish* spell removes the curse, but each dying curse also must have a single means of removing the curse with some deed that the DM designates.

The deed must be something that the target can accomplish within one year, assuming the task is undertaken immediately. For example:

- "Slay the dragon under Castle Bluecraft"
- "Climb the tallest mountain in the world"

The target of the dying curse can have help accomplishing the deed. Someone else can accomplish the deed as long as removing the curse is the expressed purpose.

For dying creatures of CR 9 or lower, *remove curse* cast at 5th level or higher is sufficient.

Family Curses

Sometimes curses are passed through the generations of a single family like a hereditary disease. A family curse can pass from a parent to all children, or the curse can simply pass to the oldest child, the youngest child, the oldest child of a particular gender, a child with a particular trait, and so on.

A family curse can be the result of a particularly powerful dying curse, a *wish* spell, the use of an artifact, or the intervention of a god.

Sample Family Curses

- Each oldest son is doomed to murder his father
- The youngest daughter in each generation is doomed to become an evil spellcaster
- The children of the family born with red hair are all terribly unlucky (disadvantage on all ability checks once per day, DM's choice of timing)
- One male child of each generation is doomed to be eaten by a dragon
- The sixth daughter of a sixth daughter will bring doom to her entire land

Family curses can be undone as described for dying curses. Some fate-based family curses can be forever broken if one member of the family can simply resist the doomed destiny.

Curses of Misery

Evil creatures that benefit from an overall increase in misery, darkness, and evil sometimes spread curses just to further that end. Fiends, especially devils, are often the perpetrators of misery curses.

A curse that causes a debilitating disfigurement gives misery not only to the target, but to the victim's friends, loved ones, and even strangers of a kind heart who merely see them. Less kind passersby might mock or shun the target of the curse. And so the fiend's work progresses: The curse punishes creatures with kind hearts and darkens the souls of those without them.

Using Curses

At times, curses may appear trivial. Why would a villain curse a foe rather than just using the same amount of magical power to obliterate the enemy instead? Because curses are an ultimate expression of true malice. It is often far more cruel to allow something to live in pain and disfigurement than to kill it and end the creature's misery.

Dying curses and greater curses can become wonderful springboards for D&D scenarios. If something cannot simply be undone with a spell, the action or remedy required to lift the curse is something that great adventures are made of.

On the other hand, don't overuse curses. Don't have every defeated villain speak a dying curse, and don't let the dying curse become routine. Let a curse be a rare moment of true drama for your campaign.

Curse Adventure Hooks

Curses can drive entire campaigns:

- **Family Curse**: Players discover a family curse affecting an important NPC
- **Dying Curse**: A defeated villain's dying curse sends the party on a quest
- **Curse Investigation**: A town suffers from a mysterious curse requiring investigation
- **Cursed Item**: An important magic item carries a terrible curse

Curses work best when they create ongoing story opportunities rather than simple inconveniences.

Diseases

The *Dungeon Master's Guide* presents some diseases that characters may encounter. Provided here are even more diseases. While all diseases are terrible, these are particularly malign and vile, spawned from the corruption and influence of evil outsiders, gods, or evil emotions.

Designer's Note: 5e diseases typically use Constitution saving throws and impose conditions rather than ability score damage. Where the original 3.5e disease dealt ability damage, we've translated this into a mix of ability score reduction (for the most severe diseases) and conditions like exhaustion, poisoned, or incapacitated (for less severe ones). Ability score reduction in 5e is rare and powerful — it's reserved here for the most horrific diseases to maintain that weight.

Disease Mechanics

Characters who come into contact with one of these diseases must make an immediate **Constitution saving throw**. On a success, the disease has no effect because the immune system fought off the infection. Characters who fail the save suffer the disease's effects after the incubation period.

Once per day afterward (typically at dawn), a diseased character must succeed on a **Constitution saving throw** to avoid repeated effects. Two successful saving throws in a row indicate that the character has fought off the disease and recovers. The *lesser restoration* spell cures most of these diseases; exceptions are noted.

Disease Characteristics

Disease	Infection	DC	Incubation	Effect
Acid fever	Injury	18	1d3 days	2 levels of exhaustion; poisoned
Blue guts	Ingestion	14	1d3 days	1 level of exhaustion; poisoned
Deathsong	Contact	25	1 day	Str, Dex, and Con each reduced by 1d6 per day
Faceless hate	Injury	20	1d4 days	Str and Con each reduced by 1d4 per day; special (see below)
Festering anger	Special	22	Varies	Special (see below)
Fire taint	Inhaled	18	1 day	Wis reduced by 1d4 per day
Frigid ravaging	Injury	18	1 day	Con reduced by 1d4 per day
Iron corruption	Injury	24	1d3 days	Con reduced by 1d4 per day; poisoned
Life blindness	Inhaled	21	1 day	Special (see below)
Lightning curse	Contact	18	1 day	Int reduced by 1d4 per day
Melting fury	Contact	16	1d6 days	1d4 necrotic damage per day; Str, Dex, and Con each reduced by 1d2 per day
Misery's passage	Injury	15	Varies	1 level of exhaustion per day; special (see below)
Possession infection	Contact	17	1 day	Wis and Cha each reduced by 1d4 per day
Sound sickness	Contact	18	1d3 days	Speed halved; disadvantage on Dex checks and saves
Soul rot	Ingestion	23	1d8 days	Wis and Cha each reduced by 1d4 per day
Vile rigidity	Contact	19	1 day	Special (see below)
Warp touch	Contact	20	Immediate	Special (see below)

Disease Descriptions

Acid Fever

When a character takes more than 30 points of acid damage and is at the same time exposed to great evil, they risk contracting acid fever. Festering boils cover the victim's flesh, and the skin blackens and withers. The victim gains 2 levels of exhaustion and is poisoned. Each failed daily save adds another level of exhaustion.

Blue Guts

This disease comes from eating the flesh of particularly disgusting creatures such as otyughs, gibbering mouthers, and gray oozes. It results in a bluish complexion, particularly around the creature's intestines. Many predatory monstrosities, aberrations, and other creatures are immune to this disease, but no humanoids are.

Deathsong

One of the worst diseases known, this terrible plague has laid waste to entire communities in less than a week. Victims of deathsong can do nothing but shriek and howl as their bodies wither and blacken. The progress of the disease is so fast that a victim can hear their skin crackle and their bones grow brittle and break. *Lesser restoration* cannot cure deathsong; only *greater restoration* or *heal* suffices.

Faceless Hate

When a victim's Strength or Constitution is reduced to 0 by this disease, the infection disappears. The character's ability scores are immediately restored, but they become a monster with no face. The character loses the ability to see and speak, but gains blindsight with a range of 60 feet. The victim's alignment changes to neutral evil, and they become intent on killing all those who were their friends and family. Only *wish* or *greater restoration* cast at 9th level can reverse this transformation.

Festering Anger

Brought upon by long-term, intense fury and hatred, this disease manifests as dark boils across the skin. The incubation period varies, but it usually takes at least a year for festering anger to erupt.

Each day after onset, the character's Constitution is reduced by 1d2, but their Strength score increases by 2 (to a maximum of 26). Each day, the victim must also succeed on a **Wisdom saving throw** (DC 22) or be compelled to attack whatever has made them so angry, as if under the *compulsion* spell.

Fire Taint

When a character takes more than 30 points of fire damage and is at the same time exposed to great evil, they risk contracting fire taint. Their flesh reddens and their insides seem to burn. The victim vomits bile during the worst of the disease.

Frigid Ravaging

When a character takes more than 30 points of cold damage and is at the same time exposed to great evil, they risk contracting frigid ravaging. The victim's extremities blacken with supernatural frostbite.

Iron Corruption

This disease comes from prolonged exposure to iron worked in conditions of extreme toil and misery. It often spreads from a stab wound or an arrowhead lodged in one's flesh for too long. The victim is gripped with terrible chills and their skin turns a dull metallic hue.

Life Blindness

The infected victim loses all ability to perceive living creatures, even plants. All such beings are treated as invisible, silent, and odorless to the victim. The loneliness and alienation eventually drive the victim to be completely antisocial. After 1d4 days, the victim has disadvantage on all Wisdom and Charisma checks and saving throws. *Lesser restoration* cannot cure life blindness; only *greater restoration* suffices.

Lightning Curse

When a character takes more than 30 points of lightning damage and is at the same time exposed to great evil, they risk contracting lightning curse. As their blood vessels burst, the victim is covered in blue and black bruises. Their muscles ache and they cannot think straight.

Melting Fury

Caught by characters who handle undead flesh, this disease is horrific to watch. The victim's flesh slowly liquefies and "melts" off their body until they are dead.

Misery's Passage

Brought upon by long-term, intense emotions of sadness and despair, this disease manifests as dark boils. The incubation period varies. In addition to gaining exhaustion levels, the victim must succeed on a **Wisdom saving throw** (DC 15) every day or be incapacitated for that day, overwhelmed by despair.

Possession Infection

This malady occurs only after an evil spirit, fiend, or other dominating force has possessed the victim. The victim slowly becomes despondent and lethargic, apparently mentally affected by the alien presence that was within their soul.

Sound Sickness

When a character takes more than 30 points of thunder damage and is at the same time exposed to great evil, they risk contracting sound sickness. Given to fits of shouting, the victim shows no visible illness, but staggers about, barely able to keep to their feet.

Soul Rot

Creatures that eat the flesh of an evil fiend can contract this horrible malady. Soul rot eats at the victim's mind and soul until they die a horrible, agonizing death full of pain and misery. *Lesser restoration* cannot cure soul rot; only *greater restoration* or *heal* suffices.

Vile Rigidity

This infection at first seems a boon. The victim's skin toughens, granting a +1 bonus to AC 24 hours after infection. Each day thereafter, the victim's skin becomes thicker and thicker, adding a cumulative +1 bonus to AC and reducing their Dexterity score by 2. This continues until the victim's Dexterity reaches 0, indicating death by suffocation. *Lesser restoration* halts the progression for 24 hours but does not cure it; only *greater restoration* fully cures vile rigidity.

Warp Touch

One of the worst effects of raw chaos and dissolution, warp touch has a random set of effects that manifest immediately. Once it takes hold, no more saving throws are needed: the malady gets neither better nor worse. *Lesser restoration* and *remove curse* accomplish nothing. Only *greater restoration*, *heal*, or *wish* can undo the effects.

When a character falls victim to this disease, roll on the following table:

d100	Effect
01–10	Body turns to formless jelly; character dies
11–15	One arm becomes useless; Str, Con, and Dex each reduced by 1d6
16–20	One leg becomes useless; Str, Con, and Dex each reduced by 1d6
21–23	Eyes fall out; permanent blindness (blinded condition)
24–28	Huge lump grows on head; Int and Wis each reduced by 1d6
29–32	Fingers twist into tangles; Dex reduced by 1d8

d100	Effect
33–36	Become very thin; Str and Con each reduced by 1d6
37–38	Mouth seals forever; cannot speak or use verbal spell components
39–40	Legs become snake tails; speed reduced by half
41–42	Skin turns random color
43–44	Eyes turn random color
45–46	Hair turns random color
47–48	Tongue grows very long
49–50	Lose all hair
51–52	Skin forms blotches of different colors
53–54	Body covered with tufts of hair
55–56	Grow vestigial wings (nonfunctional)
57–58	Grow extra, useless arm
59–60	Grow vestigial tail
61–62	Skin withers
63–64	Back curves, grows hump
65–66	Arms become tentacles; cannot hold objects, but gain a grapple attack (+5 to hit, reach 10 ft., target is grappled on hit, escape DC 13)
67–68	Grow extra eye; advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight
69–70	Legs grow more muscular; walking speed increases by 10 ft.
71–72	Head swells; Intelligence score increases by 4 (max 24)
73–74	Grow claws; unarmed strikes deal 1d6 slashing damage
75–76	Grow a very wide mouth; gain a bite attack (1d6 piercing damage)
77–78	Grow snakelike arm; it attacks on its own as a bonus action each turn (1d4 piercing + 2d6 poison damage, DC 13 Con save for half poison)
79–80	Grow horns; gain a gore attack (2d4 piercing damage)
81–82	Grow thick skin; +2 bonus to AC
83–84	Grow scales; +3 bonus to AC
85–86	Grow longer legs; Dexterity score increases by 2 (max 22)
87–88	Arms grow freakishly muscular; Strength score increases by 2 (max 22)
89–90	Become freakishly stout; Constitution score increases by 2 (max 22)
91	Grow working wings; gain a flying speed of 30 ft.
92	Petrifying eyes; gain a gaze attack as a **medusa** (DC 14 Con save or petrified)
93	Form oozing pustules; any creature you touch must succeed on a DC 15 Con save or be poisoned for 1 hour
94	Form steaming pustules; creatures within 5 feet must succeed on a DC 15 Con save or be poisoned until the start of their next turn
95–100	Roll twice (reroll additional results of 95–100)

Disease Adventure Hooks

Diseases can drive compelling stories:

- **Plague Investigation**: A town suffers from a mysterious supernatural disease
- **Disease Quest**: Players must find the cure for a disease affecting an important NPC
- **Disease Source**: Track down the source of a disease outbreak

- **Disease Weapon**: Villains are using diseases as weapons against the kingdom

Diseases work best when they create urgency and mystery, driving players to seek solutions while dealing with the immediate threats.

Dark Powers

The following elements of evil lore can be used as plot hooks, new game mechanics to further depict evil, or some of both.

The Calling

Once every few years, a creature of pure evil — a medusa, troll, lamia, or similar being — feels something loremasters have named the Calling. When this occurs, the creature leaves its lair, following a solitary magical compulsion. No one knows exactly where the creature goes, but a good guess is that it is taken away by a powerful fiend or some minor evil god.

Effects of the Calling

When a creature returns home after it has heard the Calling, it has gained some or all of the following:

- The ability to attune to and activate magic items as though it were a spellcaster
- A terrible evil magic item (such as a *wand of fireballs* that deals necrotic damage, or a weapon with vile properties)
- Permanent magical effects (functional wings granting a fly speed, the ability to cast *see invisibility* at will, etc.)
- Proficiency with all armor and martial weapons

Designer's Note: The Calling is a great way to explain why a "standard" monster suddenly has class levels, magic items, or unusual abilities. In 5e terms, it's a narrative justification for giving a creature a higher CR, legendary actions, lair actions, or unique traits that go beyond its base stat block.

Creatures who return from the Calling often become leaders of their kind, ready to combat the forces of good with their new weapons and abilities. This lends further credence to the idea that some evil force is preparing them for a larger conflict.

Dark Chant

A few undead learn the secret of the dark chant from forbidden scrolls and forgotten books. The dark chant is not a spell, but a number of particularly foul necromantic words and phrases strung together into a litany of evil power.

Effects

If at least two undead creatures with Intelligence scores of 6 or higher intone the dark chant together, all undead within 100 feet gain the following benefits:

- **Turn Resistance.** Undead affected by the chant have advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.
- **Bolstered.** If the average CR of the chanters is 5 or higher, affected undead also gain temporary hit points equal to the average CR of the chanters at the start of each of their turns while the chant continues.

- **Incorporeal Amplification.** If the chanters are incorporeal undead, the turn resistance extends to 200 feet, and affected undead also have resistance to radiant damage while the chant continues.

The chant requires concentration (as a spell) from each participating undead. It ends if all chanters are destroyed, incapacitated, or silenced.

Some surmise that the dark chant has power because it actually uses some words from the Dark Speech, although the words and phrases may be bastardized, barely understood, and mispronounced.

Dark Speech

There exists a language so dire, so inherently full of spite, malice, corruption, and hatred that it is simply called the Dark Speech. This is the secret language of evil gods, so foul and so potent that even demons and devils refrain from its use, lest it consume them.

Learning Dark Speech

Not surprisingly, very few mortals know even a few words of the Dark Speech. But those who do are wise to never underestimate the power of words. The safest way to use the Dark Speech is through spells such as *dread word*. Most characters must take the Dark Speech feat (see Chapter 4: Vile Feats) to begin to learn the Dark Speech language.

The Dark Speech is extremely difficult to master. A special feat is required to speak even a single word of it correctly, for mortal tongues were not designed to utter these words of pure evil. Some fiends know smatterings (or more) of the Dark Speech and need no feat to master it.

Communication

To actually communicate by means of the Dark Speech — that is, for a knowledgeable speaker to convey some information to a knowledgeable listener — the speaker must take great care, or both listener and speaker will be harmed.

There are no words in the Dark Speech for good concepts such as kindness, mercy, and purity. However, evil characters can speak of misery, anguish, hate, and betrayal with an accuracy impossible in any other tongue.

The Dark Speech has no written form. It cannot be transliterated into another language's written form without losing all of its meaning and power.

Uses of Dark Speech

Besides communicating in the language of evil itself, there are four ways that a speaker can use the Dark Speech:

Dread

The words spoken cause fear, loathing, and dread in all who hear them. Speaking words of dread is draining to the speaker, causing 1 level of exhaustion for each round the Dark Speech is spoken.

When dread words of the Dark Speech are uttered, all creatures within 30 feet must make a **Wisdom saving throw** (DC = 8 + the speaker's proficiency bonus + the speaker's Charisma modifier). Listeners who know the Dark Speech have advantage on this saving throw.

Effects on creatures that fail the save:

Listener	Effect
CR/Level 1–4, non-evil	Frightened of the speaker for 1 minute; must use their movement to flee
CR/Level 5–10, non-evil	Frightened of the speaker for 1d10 rounds; disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws for the duration
CR/Level 11+, non-evil	Filled with loathing; must use their next action to attack the speaker
CR/Level 1–4, evil	Incapacitated for 1d10 rounds, frozen in terror
CR/Level 5–10, evil	Charmed by the speaker for 1d10 minutes
CR/Level 11+, evil	Impressed; the speaker has advantage on Charisma checks made against the listener for the next 24 hours

Power

The words of the Dark Speech help energize evil magic items and spells. This is draining to the speaker, causing 1 level of exhaustion each time the words of power are uttered.

If used in conjunction with an evil spell that has a verbal component, the Dark Speech increases the spell's save DC by 1 and grants the caster advantage on any spell attack roll for that spell. If used when creating an evil magic item during downtime, the Dark Speech reduces the crafting time by 1 workweek and the gold cost by 10%.

It is likely that the Dark Speech is a requirement for many evil artifacts.

Corruption

The words of the Dark Speech, whispered softly, can weaken physical objects. As an action, the speaker can whisper vile words of corruption and destruction at an inanimate object such as a door or wall, halving the object's AC and hit points. This minor use of the Dark Speech is not draining to the speaker. It cannot be used more than once on a single object.

Dark Unity

The words of the Dark Speech can create a hivemind. Up to one hundred beasts of CR 1/4 or lower form an evil hivemind. The united consciousness will take one command from the Dark Speech speaker, as if from the *suggestion* spell (no saving throw). Pulling creatures under the sway of evil is draining to the speaker, causing 1 level of exhaustion each time words of dark unity are uttered.

Using Dark Powers in Campaigns

These powers can create memorable encounters:

- **Called Creature**: Players encounter a creature that has recently returned from the Calling
- **Dark Chant Ritual**: Players must disrupt an undead dark chant ceremony
- **Dark Speech Discovery**: Players find forbidden texts containing Dark Speech
- **Dark Unity Swarm**: Face a hivemind of vermin controlled by Dark Speech

Dark powers work best when they're mysterious and dangerous, creating awe and fear rather than being common tools.

Evil Resources

Souls as Power

Souls are the incarnate manifestation of life energy. As such, they contain a vast amount of power. Their power is so great, in fact, that they serve as currency on the Lower Planes. Night hags or fiends gather evil souls in the form of larvae, then sell or trade them for goods, services, or simply as tribute to more powerful entities.

Designer's Note: 5e doesn't use XP as a crafting cost. Souls have been reimagined as a crafting accelerant that reduces gold cost and time — mechanically similar to the dark craft system in the Sacrifice section, but more potent. This keeps souls feeling valuable and horrifying without relying on a defunct subsystem.

Using Souls

Souls can be used as spell components and can reduce the gold cost and crafting time when creating magic items. Each soul reduces the gold cost of an evil magic item by 250 gp and the crafting time by 1 workweek. When the creator finishes making the magic item, it is tainted with lasting evil.

To use a soul in any way, it must be properly prepared and stored. The best way to do this is in a proper receptacle, such as the gem involved in a *soul cage*, *imprisonment*, or *trap the soul* spell. The *dark altar stone* magic item (see Chapter 6: Evil Magic Items) is also useful in this regard.

Using a soul in any way other than simply transferring it as barter consumes it completely, destroying it forever. Destroying a soul is an evil act of the blackest sort, even if the soul was evil itself.

Pain as Power

Some spells and magic items allow pain to be stored in special receptacles. The distilled pain, often called agony, is a thick liquid.

Liquid Pain

Evil spellcasters can use liquid pain in magic item creation. Each dose reduces the gold cost of an evil magic item by 50 gp. Liquid pain can be used in conjunction with dark craft rewards and souls.

A dose of pain can also be used as a special evil spell component. When used as an additional material component for a spell with the evil descriptor, the spell's save DC increases by 1 for that casting. Some infernal magic items are powered by pain.

It takes a full day to distill a dose of liquid pain from a living, restrained creature. A victim cannot endure more extractions of pain than its Constitution score. Each extraction deals 1d4 psychic damage to the victim that cannot be reduced or prevented in any way.

Hivemind

As a side effect of some evil spiritual presence or dark blessing, vermin and certain animals can take on a sort of evil consciousness shared among a large group, though each individual member retains little or no intellect.

Hivemind Formation

If at least 50 beasts of the same species (each CR 1/4 or lower) are arranged so that no one individual is more than 10 feet from another individual, the hivemind may come into effect.

Hivemind Intelligence

All the creatures operate with a shared Intelligence of 5, even if they previously had no Intelligence score. The hivemind's Intelligence score increases by 1 for every additional 20 individuals (beyond the first 50), up to an Intelligence of 10 for a hivemind of 150 creatures. Beyond the 150-creature threshold, Intelligence increases by 1 for every 50 additional individuals.

For each point of Intelligence modifier the hivemind possesses (+1 or higher), each individual creature in the hivemind gains:

- Proficiency in one skill of the DM's choice
- The ability to take the Dodge, Dash, or Help action as a bonus action on its turn

Hivemind Abilities

If the hivemind attains a Charisma score of 18 or higher, it gains innate spellcasting. The hivemind's spellcasting ability is Charisma. For every point of Charisma above 17, the hivemind can cast one additional spell per day from the following list (DM's choice): *command*, *hold person*, *fear*, *confusion*, *dominate person*.

Creatures in a hivemind have no need for somatic or material components, and their squeaks, screeches, or clicks serve as verbal components. Any single creature can cast one of the hivemind's spells, but those uses are then expended for the entire hivemind.

Hivemind Combat

When creatures in a hivemind attack, they gain the following benefits from their shared consciousness:

- +1 bonus to attack rolls and AC
- They cannot be surprised
- Each creature is aware of what every other member of the hivemind is experiencing
- They coordinate attacks with uncanny precision (treat as having the Pack Tactics trait)

Hivemind Challenge Rating

A hivemind's effective Challenge Rating is greater than that of an individual creature:

Individual CR	Hivemind CR
0	1/2
1/8	1
1/4	2
1/2	3
1+	Individual CR + 2

Designer's Note: For combat, use the **swarm** stat blocks from the *Monster Manual* as a baseline, adding the hivemind's Intelligence-based abilities and innate spellcasting on top. Alternatively, run the hivemind as a single "creature" with legendary actions representing coordinated swarm behavior.

Using Evil Resources in Campaigns

These resources can drive complex storylines:

Soul Trade

- Players discover a soul trafficking operation
- Characters must protect innocent souls from fiendish collectors
- A villain is collecting souls for a powerful ritual

Pain Extraction

- An evil torturer is extracting pain for magical purposes
- Players must stop the pain extraction and rescue victims
- A pain-powered magical device threatens the region

Hivemind Invasion

- A hivemind of vermin threatens a town or region
- Players must disrupt the hivemind's consciousness
- The hivemind is being controlled by an evil spellcaster

Ethical Considerations

These mechanics involve dark themes:

- **Soul Destruction**: Consider the moral implications of destroying souls
- **Torture**: Pain extraction involves graphic themes
- **Loss of Self**: Hiveminds involve loss of individual identity

Use these elements thoughtfully and ensure they serve the story rather than being included for shock value alone. Consider your players' comfort levels and handle sensitive topics appropriately.

Evil Effects

Vile Damage

Vile damage, like regular damage, results in the loss of hit points. Unlike regular damage, **vile damage also reduces the target's hit point maximum** by the same amount. This reduction lasts until the creature receives healing magic while within the area of a *hallow* spell or similar consecrated ground, or until the creature is targeted by *greater restoration* or *heal*.

Designer's Note: Vile damage is the signature mechanic of this book. In 5e terms, it works like the damage from a specter's Life Drain or a wraith's attack — hit point maximum reduction that requires specific conditions to heal. This makes vile damage feel genuinely threatening without introducing an entirely new subsystem. The key distinction: ordinary healing restores hit points but does NOT restore the reduced maximum. Only consecrated healing or powerful restoration magic can do that.

Vile damage represents such an evil violation to a character's body or soul that only in a holy place can healing magic repair the damage.

Evil Weather

As a plague sent by an evil god or the byproduct of greater evil, various manifestations of evil weather can threaten the well-being of vast areas and huge numbers of people. Like mundane weather, evil weather is unpredictable, and it rarely appears the same way twice.

Types of Evil Weather

Violet Rain

Always accompanied by a terrible thunderstorm filled with lightning, violet rain brings portents of great evil. Once violet rain begins to fall, all connection with divine agencies is severed for 24 hours.

Effects:

- Clerics, paladins, druids, and rangers cannot cast spells or use Channel Divinity
- Active divine spell effects are suppressed (as if in an *antimagic field*, but only for divine magic)
- Magic items created by divine magic cease to function
- Covers 1d10 × 200 square miles

Green Fog

Clouds of dark greenish mist roll across the countryside. The fog perverts any living thing it touches, twisting and mutating flesh.

Effects:

- Creatures that start their turn in the fog must succeed on a **DC 17 Constitution saving throw** or be affected as by the *polymorph* spell, transformed into a random beast of CR 1 or lower for 1 hour. On a success, the creature is immune to the fog for 24 hours.
- Covers 1d3 square miles
- Lasts for 10d6 minutes
- Moves at 30 feet per round

Plague of Nettles

Tiny organic thorns fall from the sky. Those caught in this brief rainfall take 1d4 piercing damage at the start of each of their turns unless under shelter.

Effects:

- Nettles that strike soil burrow into the ground and sprout thick, choking weeds
- Kills crops in minutes
- One week later, the area is thick with animate, dangerous plants (use **twig blight** or **awakened shrub** stat blocks)
- Spreads across 3d6 square miles
- Lasts for 3d6 rounds

Rain of Blood

This horrible event can occur as part of a regular thunderstorm or all on its own. Blood pours down in thick drops for 2d10 minutes.

Effects:

- Living, non-evil creatures must succeed on a **DC 15 Wisdom saving throw** or have disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws for 24 hours
- Corporeal undead gain advantage on attack rolls and saving throws for 24 hours
- Covers 5d6 square miles

Rain of Frogs or Fish

This preternatural rain causes 1d4 bludgeoning damage at the start of each turn to anyone not under shelter. The thousands of animals that fall from the sky usually die, but 1 in 20 lives briefly.

Effects:

- Deals 1d4 bludgeoning damage per round
- Lasts 2d6 rounds
- Covers 2d6 square miles

Lingering Effects of Evil

Great acts of evil and towering amounts of sin take a huge toll on the people involved, and the evil often lingers in the location where it manifested. Worse, the echoes of evil remain even when the evil itself is gone. Powerful evil can change a creature's body and soul, and acts of foul malevolence can mar a location or an important object forever.

Designer's Note: These lingering effects are designed as DM tools for worldbuilding and atmosphere, not as precise combat mechanics. Use them to set the tone of locations, explain why certain areas are dangerous, and create adventure hooks. The *detect evil and good* spell and a paladin's Divine Sense can detect these effects.

Degrees of Lingering Evil

The lingering effects of evil are based loosely on the level of evil involved:

A Bad Feeling

Even a short act of violence or a minor act of evil can have lingering effects.

Causes:

- A gruesome, bloodthirsty murder
- The proclamation of a foul edict
- A single sacrifice to an evil god or fiend
- The animation of dozens of undead creatures
- Abuse, starvation, and mistreatment of captives
- Casting a permanent or long-lasting spell with the evil descriptor

Effects:

- **Creatures**: Nightmares after exposure (DC 10 Wisdom save to benefit from a long rest); certain undead may spontaneously rise
- **Locations**: Slight feeling of wrongness; undead or fiends within the area gain the benefit of *bless* (no concentration)
- **Objects**: Usually no effect
- **Detection**: *Detect evil and good* does not register, but creatures can sense a cold chill; Divine Sense detects a faint presence

A Lasting Evil

Evil events so great that they last for a long time require true malice and intentionally committed foul deeds.

Causes:

- Building an evil temple
- Multiple sacrifices to an evil god or fiend
- Summoning multiple fiends
- Committing mass murder or storing grisly trophies
- Multiple possessions of innocents
- Long-term presence of powerful undead or fiends

Effects:

- **Creatures**: Nightmares (DC 13 Wisdom save to benefit from a long rest), short-term madness (see *DMG* Chapter 8), or indefinite madness after prolonged exposure
- **Locations**: Unnatural chill, absence of plant life, unnerving sounds, cold wind; the area counts as desecrated ground
- **Objects**: Darker/paler color, warped shape, unnaturally cold; may become possessed by fiends (see Possession, Chapter 2)
- **Detection**: *Detect evil and good* registers a faint aura; Divine Sense detects a clear desecration

A Great and Powerful Malevolence

Only a few events involving this degree of evil exist in an entire world.

Causes:

- Building a portal to the Lower Planes
- Bringing powerful fiends to an evil temple on the Material Plane
- Committing daily multiple sacrifices over hundreds of years
- The presence of an evil god walking the Material Plane

Effects:

- **Creatures**: Psychological trauma (indefinite madness) and physical changes — white hair, pale flesh, black or red eyes, foul odor. Neutral-aligned creatures must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma saving throw each day or shift one step toward evil. Creatures may become possessed (see Possession, Chapter 2)
- **Locations**: Evil weather manifests, natural healing is impossible, good-aligned spells fail automatically, greenish glow, foul odor, structures weaken (objects have half their normal hit points)
- **Objects**: Faint greenish glow, foul odor, weakened structure; magic items may develop cursed properties
- **Detection**: *Detect evil and good* always indicates a strong aura; creatures who spend more than 1 hour in the area radiate an evil aura for 1d10 × 10 hours afterward

Darkness Like the World Has Never Seen Before

Generally unique in all the world, such an event scars the nature of reality.

Causes:

- An act of genocide
- The birth of an evil god
- The murder of a god, demigod, or legendary hero of light

Effects:

- **Creatures**: Severe trauma — greenish glow, poisoned condition (permanent until *greater restoration*), all ability scores reduced by 2, beasts flee on sight. Creatures may involuntarily gain the Evil Brand or Willing Deformity feat. Blood becomes mildly acidic (1 acid damage to creatures that draw the character's blood). Prolonged exposure may apply the **half-fiend** template or similar corruption
- **Locations**: *Hallow* (with harmful effects) spreads outward at 1 mile per year, landscape physically changes (rivers run red, trees wither, stone cracks), permanent evil weather settles over the region
- **Objects**: Painful to touch (1d4 necrotic damage per round of contact for good-aligned creatures), may spontaneously become evil artifacts
- **Detection**: *Detect evil and good* always indicates an overwhelming aura; creatures who enter the area radiate an evil aura for 1d10 × 10 days afterward

Using Evil Effects in Campaigns

These effects can create memorable locations and ongoing story elements:

- **Haunted Locations**: Areas with lasting evil become adventure sites
- **Cursed Regions**: Evil weather creates ongoing threats to settlements
- **Corrupted Characters**: Characters exposed to great evil may develop lasting changes
- **Evil Artifacts**: Objects exposed to great evil become dangerous treasures

Evil effects work best when they create atmosphere and ongoing challenges rather than simple mechanical penalties.

Chapter 3: Evil Equipment

Torture Devices

All manner of devices exist for inflicting pain. Each of the torture devices described in this section grants a bonus to the Charisma (Intimidation) check made by a torturer against a victim — the more effective the device, the greater the modifier.

Rules of Torture

The torturer's victim must first be secured, either by being tied in place, grappled and restrained, or locked in a stationary torture device. A victim in a device can use their action to attempt a **Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check** (victim's choice) against the device's escape DC.

If the victim attempts to escape in the knowing presence of the torturer, whether or not the check succeeds, the torturer can use their reaction to make a melee attack against the restrained victim (attack rolls against a restrained creature have advantage, and the attack is an automatic critical hit if the torturer is within 5 feet).

Once the victim is secure, the torturer can attempt one use of a torture device in the given time frame (once per round unless otherwise noted). The torturer makes a **Charisma (Intimidation) check** with the device's bonus. The DC is **10 + the victim's Wisdom modifier + the victim's proficiency bonus** (if proficient in Intimidation or Insight).

A victim can choose to reveal information before torture is applied. Merely threatening to use a torture device can be effective: if the torturer succeeds on a **Charisma (Deception) check** contested by the victim's **Wisdom (Insight) check**, the torturer can add half the device's bonus (rounded down) to their subsequent Intimidation check.

When using a torture device, a torturer can attempt multiple Intimidation checks to extract the same information. A successful check indicates the victim yields up the requisite information.

A victim can attempt to mislead a torturer by making a **Charisma (Deception) check** contested by the torturer's **Wisdom (Insight) check**. Because the torturer is convinced of her methods — that pain reveals truth, and that torture can't be withstood — the torturer has disadvantage on Insight checks to see through the bluffs of those she tortures.

Even victims who don't really know the information sought by the torturer can be compelled to lie to make the hurt go away. The tendency of victims to say anything to stop the pain makes torture impractical in some cases. But even when a torturer feels as if she's extracted the truth, she may continue the torture anyway.

If a victim is reduced to 0 hit points through the use of torture equipment, then later healed, the torturer has advantage on all subsequent Intimidation checks against that victim.

Torture Devices as Weapons

Nonstationary items such as pokers and scalpels make poor melee weapons. In melee, torture devices deal half the damage listed in the table (rounded down, minimum 1), if the device can be used in melee at all. They are improvised weapons.

Masterwork Devices

Masterwork torture devices can be made, but do not provide higher bonuses. They simply exhibit finer craftsmanship and cost twice as much.

Device Descriptions

Branding Iron/Poker

Heated in hot coals, this iron rod is used to create painful but nonfatal burns. The burn deals 1d4 fire damage and allows one Intimidation check.

Dagger

Any weapon could be used as a device of torture, though traditional weapons do their jobs too well — the risk of killing the victim too quickly becomes a concern. If a dagger is used as a torture device, each use deals 2d4 piercing damage and allows one Intimidation check.

Hot Lead

The torturer melts lead, then pours it on the victim's skin. Often the palm, the arm, or the belly is the target, but sometimes torturers drip lead on the eyelids or other delicate tissues. Each use deals 1d4 fire damage and allows one Intimidation check.

Iron Maiden

This coffin-shaped iron box is laden with spikes on the interior surfaces. Anyone placed inside is pierced dozens of times, and any movement causes more pain. The iron maiden has several settings that determine how tightly the two sides come together when the device is closed.

Settings:

- **Low setting**: 1 piercing damage per round
- **Moderate setting**: 5 piercing damage per round
- **Severe setting**: 10 piercing damage per round
- **Terminal setting**: 50 piercing damage per round

Once the iron maiden is closed to any setting, the torturer can make an Intimidation check every round.

Jaw Breaker

This wood and metal device is like a reverse thumbscrew. The torturer inserts the jaw breaker into the victim's mouth, then turns a small wheel. As the wheel turns, two opposing plates force the victim's mouth wider and wider, breaking teeth and eventually the jawbone. Each use deals 2d4 bludgeoning damage and allows one Intimidation check. The jaw breaker must generally be removed for the victim to speak coherently.

Needle

Large needles or nails can be inserted into the flesh of the victim in places that maximize pain and minimize real damage. Each needle deals 1 piercing damage. Usually, three or four of these are used on a victim per Intimidation check.

Pillory

This wooden device, consisting of a frame with holes for the victim's head and hands, is designed to confine and restrain a victim. When the pillory is located in a public place, the torturer, her minions, and even passing strangers can taunt, assault, and further humiliate the victim.

Each 8 hours of confinement typically deals 1d6 bludgeoning damage and allows one Intimidation check.

Rack

A long, table-shaped device, the rack is equipped with chains and winches hooked up to manacles. As a crank is turned, the rack stretches the victim's arms and legs. Each 30 minutes spent on the rack deals 1 bludgeoning damage and allows one Intimidation check.

Scalpel/Flenser

A finely crafted knife with a short, sharp blade, the scalpel is used by surgeons to cut away diseased flesh. When used by a torturer, the scalpel pares lengths of skin away, then removes a digit or an earlobe. Each use deals 1d6 slashing damage and allows one Intimidation check. Flensers are similar knives used to remove the skin from a body.

Thumb Screws

This small wood and metal device slowly crushes the thumb or finger of a victim. It causes a lot of pain, but deals only 1 bludgeoning damage per use. Each time the thumbscrews tighten, the torturer can make another Intimidation check.

Tied Down

Anything used to tie down a victim is not a torture device. But if the victim sees many ancillary and/or stationary torture devices nearby, the torturer can make an immediate Intimidation check using half of the bonus for the most threatening visible device.

Torture Device Table

Device	Intimidation Bonus	Escape DC	Damage	Cost	Weight
Branding iron/poker	+3	—	1d4 fire	2 gp	4 lb.
Dagger	+4	—	2d4 piercing	2 gp	1 lb.
Hot lead	+3	—	1d4 fire	1 sp	1 lb.
Iron maiden (low)	+6	25	1/round	200 gp	250 lb.
Iron maiden (moderate)	+8	25	5/round	—	—
Iron maiden (severe)	+10	25	10/round	—	—
Iron maiden (terminal)	+12	25	50/round	—	—
Jaw breaker	+4	—	2d4 bludgeoning	10 gp	1 lb.
Needle	+2	—	1 piercing	1 sp	—
Pillory	+2	20	1d6/8 hrs	50 gp	50 lb.
Rack	+5	22	1/30 min	150 gp	200 lb.
Scalpel/flenser	+4	—	1d6 slashing	4 gp	—
Thumbscrew	+3	—	1 bludgeoning	1 gp	1 lb.
Tied down	+0	*	—	1 sp	1 lb.

*Escape DC equals the result of the torturer's Dexterity check made when tying the knots (typically DC 10–15 for rope, DC 20+ for manacles).

Using Torture in Campaigns

Torture can create intense moral dilemmas:

- **Interrogation**: Players must decide whether to use torture to extract information
- **Rescue**: Players must rescue someone from torture
- **Investigation**: Discovering torture chambers and stopping them
- **Moral Choices**: Dealing with the aftermath of torture

Torture should be handled carefully and consider player comfort levels. It works best as a dramatic element rather than a common occurrence.

Execution Equipment

Execution of prisoners, far from light and hope of rescue, is something all creatures fear when venturing into realms where vengeance or brute malice holds sway. Despicable overlords and despotic states alike enjoy particularly cruel forms of execution, deriding even the idea of lesser penalties. And even an otherwise enlightened society may find that vengeance is more important to it than reformation of the convicted.

The executioner seeks death for the condemned with a swift stroke. Sometimes, death by torture is the command given to the executioner, but in such case he will often remand the client to a torturer to carry out the sentence.

However, many execution devices are also extraordinarily painful for those destined to feel their cruel, final embrace.

Rules of Execution

The condemned must first be secured by being tied in place, grappled and restrained, or locked in a stationary execution device. If restrained in an execution device, the condemned can use their action to attempt a **Strength**

(Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check against the device's escape DC, unless magically held or otherwise incapacitated. If grappled, the condemned can attempt to escape the grapple normally.

Once the victim is secure, the executioner can attempt the chosen method of execution. The executioner makes a **Dexterity check** using proficiency with the specific device (or proficiency with a relevant tool set, at the DM's discretion). The DC is **12** for most devices. If the check is successful, the condemned is slain according to the nature of the device. If the executioner fails, the execution is botched, and the executioner can make another check the following round.

Botched attempts deal the damage noted for the device, so the condemned may be killed even if the executioner botches the attempt. Prideful executioners — which includes most of them — take it as a personal point of dishonor if they kill the condemned on a botched execution.

Designer's Note: In 5e, there is no "coup de grace" rule. For execution scenarios involving restrained and helpless creatures, the DM can rule that an attack against an incapacitated creature within 5 feet automatically hits and is a critical hit. If the resulting damage reduces the creature to 0 hit points, it dies outright (no death saves). This mirrors the intent of the 3.5e coup de grace.

Execution Devices as Weapons

Some execution devices, such as headsman's axes, make adequate melee weapons. In melee, such an item deals normal damage for a weapon of its kind (a headsman's axe functions as a greataxe) and cannot kill instantly. Most other devices of execution cannot be used in melee.

Masterwork Devices

Masterwork execution devices grant advantage on the executioner's Dexterity check. They cost twice as much as the standard versions.

Execution Devices

Crucifixion Cross

This device consists of two lengths of wood or other strong material, plus several nails. The executioner affixes the condemned to the structure by driving nails through the wrists and the arch of each foot.

Effects: On a successful check, excruciating pain slowly kills the condemned over the next several hours: the victim loses hit points equal to 10% of their hit point maximum each hour.

Botched: The condemned is not securely fashioned to the cross and has advantage on escape checks. They still lose 10% of their hit point maximum each hour they remain on the cross.

Draw and Quarter

First, the executioner forcefully affixes a specially prepared cord to some vital internal organs of the condemned, usually the intestines; this procedure deals 3d4 piercing damage. Once the cord is affixed, the executioner either draws the cord himself, or attaches the other end to a horse that subsequently gallops away.

Effects: On a successful check, the condemned dies instantly. On a botched attempt, the cord comes loose prior to disembowelment, but the condemned still takes 5d6 slashing damage.

Hanging Rope

A rope used for this purpose has usually been boiled and stretched beforehand to eliminate further stretching and coiling. The knot is lubricated with wax to ensure a smooth slide as it tightens around the neck of the condemned.

Effects: On a successful check, the condemned dies instantly (neck is broken by the drop). If the execution is botched, the condemned is not killed by the fall but instead slowly strangles, taking 1d4 bludgeoning damage per round and being unable to breathe (suffocation rules apply; see *PHB* Chapter 8).

Headsman's Axe

When specially sharpened and held with the proper technique, a greataxe (or a greatsword) can serve the executioner as the instrument of execution. The condemned is restrained, with the neck vulnerable to the strike readied by the executioner.

Effects: On a successful check, the condemned dies instantly. If the executioner fails the attempt, the axe still strikes — the attack automatically hits and is a critical hit (as the target is incapacitated and within 5 feet). If this damage reduces the condemned to 0 hit points, they die. Otherwise, the executioner can try again next round.

Execution Device Table

Execution Device	Escape DC	Botched Damage	Cost	Weight
Crucifixion cross	15	10% HP/hour	1 gp	50 lb.
Draw and quarter	18	5d6 slashing	3 sp	1 lb.
Hanging rope	18	1d4/round + suffocation	3 sp	1 lb.
Headsman's axe	18	Auto-crit (greataxe)	20 gp	20 lb.

Using Execution in Campaigns

Execution can create powerful story elements:

- **Rescue**: Players must stop an execution before it's too late
- **Investigation**: Discovering evidence of wrongful execution
- **Moral Dilemmas**: Dealing with whether to intervene in lawful executions
- **Political Intrigue**: Execution as a tool of oppression

Execution works best as a dramatic, rare event rather than a common occurrence, maintaining its impact when it does appear.

Armor/Equipment Traps

Vindictive or paranoid creatures sometimes trap their equipment so that a trap activates if someone else attempts to use their gear. Perhaps the most common trap of this type is a contact poison spread across the surface of the item — a poison to which the owner is immune.

Even more devious are tiny, spring-loaded needles and pop-up clamps, again coated with poison. Such a trap deals 1 piercing damage and delivers whatever poison the owner wishes to use. These traps typically require a **DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check** to find but only a **DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools** to disarm: they are made to be difficult to find but simple enough to deactivate or remove.

Larger items may have many such traps. An Oathbreaker paladin, for example, might have eight or ten traps on his plate armor.

More complicated still are traps that render equipment useless to unauthorized users. An armor trap could cause the armor's joints to seize. A weapon's blade might come loose in the middle of combat, and a rope can be rigged so that unless special precautions are taken, it breaks when used.

Designer's Note: 5e trap design (see *DMG* Chapter 5 and *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*) uses Investigation to find traps and thieves' tools to disarm them. We've adopted that standard here. The DCs below are intentionally high — these are traps designed by paranoid villains, not dungeon hazards.

Example Traps

Spring Needle Trap in Sword Hilt

Unless the user activates a special latch, a needle pricks anyone who attempts to use this longsword.

- **Trap (mechanical), dangerous (CR 1–4)**
- **Trigger**: Drawing or gripping the weapon without activating the hidden latch
- **Damage**: 1 piercing damage plus poison (DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 4d6 poison damage, or half on a success)
- **Detection**: DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check
- **Disarm**: DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools
- **Market Price**: 225 gp, including one dose of poison

Plate Armor Locking Trap

If the user doesn't undo particular latches and detach some inconspicuous wires, this suit of armor becomes very difficult to move in; the various pieces lock together at one or more of the joints.

- **Trap (mechanical), setback (CR 1–4)**
- **Trigger**: Donning the armor without disabling the trap
- **Effect**: No damage; the wearer's speed is reduced to 5 feet, and they have disadvantage on all Dexterity checks and Dexterity saving throws. Removing the armor while locked requires 10 minutes and a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check
- **Detection**: DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check
- **Disarm**: DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools
- **Market Price**: 100 gp

Detaching Axe Blade

Unless two special latches are secured, the head of this battleaxe flies off during the first attack made with it.

- **Trap (mechanical), setback (CR 1–4)**
- **Trigger**: Making an attack with the weapon
- **Effect**: No damage to the wielder; weapon becomes unusable. The flying axe head may strike a random creature within 10 feet (DM's discretion, +5 to hit, 1d8 slashing damage)
- **Detection**: DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check
- **Disarm**: DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools
- **Market Price**: 40 gp

Poison Gas Spray in Coin Purse

If opened without turning a knob hidden in the latch, poison gas sprays out in a cloud around the purse, affecting only the opener.

- **Trap (mechanical), dangerous (CR 1–4)**
- **Trigger**: Opening the purse without turning the hidden knob
- **Effect**: The opener must succeed on a **DC 15 Constitution saving throw** or be poisoned for 1 hour. While poisoned in this way, the creature is also incapacitated for 1d4 rounds
- **Detection**: DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check
- **Disarm**: DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools
- **Market Price**: 625 gp, including one dose of poison

Alchemist's Fire Spray in Breastplate

Unless the user dons this breastplate very carefully, a special glass container shatters, spraying alchemist's fire on the character.

- **Trap (mechanical), dangerous (CR 1–4)**
- **Trigger**: Donning the armor without care
- **Effect**: 2d6 fire damage; **DC 15 Dexterity saving throw** for half. On a failed save, the creature also takes 1d4 fire damage at the start of each of its turns until it uses an action to extinguish the flames
- **Detection**: DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check
- **Disarm**: DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools
- **Market Price**: 110 gp

Fire Trap on Potion Vial

Opening the vial's stopper sprays fire at its possessor unless specifically attuned to it when the stopper was made.

- **Trap (magical), dangerous (CR 1–4)**
- **Trigger**: Opening the vial without being attuned
- **Effect**: 5-foot-radius burst of fire; each creature in the area must make a **DC 13 Dexterity saving throw**, taking 1d4 + 3 fire damage on a failed save, or half on a success
- **Detection**: DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check, or *detect magic* reveals an aura of abjuration
- **Disarm**: DC 17 Dexterity check using thieves' tools, or *dispel magic* (DC 13)
- **Market Price**: 60 gp

Glyph of Warding on Backpack

Unless the user speaks the proper phrase before opening this backpack, the pack explodes with a burst of acid, dealing damage to the unauthorized opener and probably destroying the contents of the pack.

- **Trap (magical), dangerous (CR 1–4)**
- **Trigger**: Opening the backpack without speaking the command word
- **Effect**: 5-foot-radius burst of acid; each creature in the area must make a **DC 15 Dexterity saving throw**, taking 2d8 acid damage on a failed save, or half on a success. Contents of the pack are likely destroyed
- **Detection**: DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check, or *detect magic* reveals an aura of abjuration
- **Disarm**: DC 18 Dexterity check using thieves' tools, or *dispel magic* (DC 13)
- **Market Price**: 150 gp

Using Equipment Traps in Campaigns

Equipment traps can create interesting challenges:

- **Discovery**: Players must identify trapped equipment before using it
- **Disarmament**: Carefully disarming traps to use valuable equipment
- **Counter-Trapping**: Creating counter-traps or protective measures
- **Investigation**: Discovering who trapped the equipment and why

Equipment traps work best when they create tactical challenges rather than simple inconveniences, forcing players to think carefully about their equipment choices.

Alchemical and Quasi-Magical Items

Some items have the taint of evil magic about them, though they aren't magic items in the strict sense of the word. And in sinister laboratories, evil necromancers work on other surprises for those who would defend good and light.

Alchemical Items Table

Item	Price	Crafting DC (Alchemist's Supplies)
Feather powder	70 gp	20
Festering bomb	50 gp	18
Karras stone knife	250 gp	—
Violated horn	3,000 gp	—
Weeping stone	100 gp	20

Feather Powder

Originally designed as a weapon against devas and couatls, this dark red alchemical powder comes in a small glass vial thrown as an improvised ranged weapon (range 20/60 ft.). On a hit, or if the vial shatters within 5 feet of a creature, the target must succeed on a **DC 15 Constitution saving throw** or have disadvantage on attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks for 1 minute due to irritation and itching.

Creatures with feathers (including aarakocra and winged celestials) have disadvantage on this saving throw and, if they fail, are also blinded for the duration as the powder clogs their plumage and stings their eyes.

Festering Bomb

This small ceramic sphere is packed with alchemical explosives, rotting meat, and offal infected with sewer plague. When thrown as an improvised ranged weapon (range 20/60 ft.), it spreads disease in its wake.

The explosion on impact is not enough to cause physical harm, but it does spray the rotten contents and infection in a 20-foot-radius area. All creatures within the area must succeed on a **DC 11 Constitution saving throw** or contract sewer plague (see *DMG* Chapter 8). Unlike normal exposure, the victim need not be injured — contact with the spray is sufficient.

Karras Stone Knife

A quasi-magical item, this simple knife must be carved from a very rare stone procured from the gallbladder of an intelligent creature slain during a special harvesting ritual. Karras stone is made only into knives because it has only one special use — otherwise, it is normal stone.

When a karras stone knife is used to sacrifice a living creature, the character using the knife gains a +2 bonus on the Intelligence (Religion) check for the sacrifice (see Chapter 2: Sacrifice).

Violated Horn

Also a quasi-magical item, the violated horn is a unicorn's horn that has been removed from a still-living unicorn, leaving the creature crippled and in constant, terrible pain.

For a violated horn to have special power, it must physically violate a victim during a perverse religious ritual conducted atop an altar dedicated to an evil god. The character performing the ritual must succeed on a **DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check** to perform the ritual properly, and no second tries are possible with that particular horn if the first check fails.

Once a violated horn is powered, its possessor can break the horn at any time thereafter and be immediately transported to the site of the ritual, as if by the *word of recall* spell.

Weeping Stone

Created through alchemical processes that inflict terrible — and sometimes lethal — pain on a living being, a weeping stone causes anyone touching it to their face to begin to weep and feel great sorrow. Such a creature is frightened (of nothing in particular — they are simply overcome with grief) for 1d6 rounds. A **DC 13 Wisdom saving throw** negates the effect.

Using Alchemical Items in Campaigns

These items can create interesting encounters:

- **Discovery**: Players finding rare alchemical formulas
- **Crafting**: Characters learning to create these items
- **Black Market**: Finding sources for rare materials
- **Plot Devices**: Using items like violated horns for transportation

Alchemical items work best when they're rare and mysterious, creating opportunities for investigation and discovery.

Drugs

Drugs function like poisons, but a creature that willingly takes a drug automatically fails its saving throw against the drug's effects. DCs are provided for situations in which a character is drugged against their will. *Protection from poison*, *lesser restoration*, and similar effects negate or end a drug's effects, but they do not restore hit points, ability scores, or other damage caused by the substance.

Designer's Note: 5e's poison rules are simpler than 3.5e's two-stage system. We've adapted drugs to have an **immediate effect** (the "high") and a **comedown effect** that kicks in when the drug wears off. Addiction uses the exhaustion track — a clean 5e mechanic that elegantly represents the deteriorating health of an addict. The *lesser restoration* spell can end a drug's active effects but cannot cure addiction.

Drug Addiction

Drug addiction functions much like diseases. Upon first willing use of a drug, the character must succeed on a **Constitution saving throw** or become addicted. Addiction severity determines the DC and withdrawal effects.

Addiction Table

Addiction Level	Con Save DC	Satiation Period	Withdrawal Effect
Negligible	5	1 day	1 level of exhaustion
Low	8	10 days	1 level of exhaustion
Medium	12	5 days	2 levels of exhaustion
High	15	2 days	2 levels of exhaustion; disadvantage on Wisdom saves
Extreme	20	1 day	3 levels of exhaustion; disadvantage on Wisdom saves
Vicious	25	1 day	4 levels of exhaustion; disadvantage on all saves

Addiction Characteristics

Addiction Rating: Drugs are rated according to their addictive potential. The addiction level increases by one step for every two full months a character remains addicted.

Satiation: Each time a user takes a drug to which they are addicted, they are satiated and stave off withdrawal symptoms for the given period. After the satiation period wears off, the withdrawal effects apply.

Withdrawal: At the end of each day without the drug (after the satiation period expires), the addicted character must succeed on a **Constitution saving throw** against the addiction DC or suffer the listed withdrawal effects. Exhaustion gained from withdrawal stacks with other sources.

Recovery: If a character makes two successful saving throws in a row, they have fought off their addiction and recover. *Greater restoration* also cures addiction. A character can always become addicted again later.

Drug Descriptions

Agony (Liquid Pain)

This thick, reddish liquid is the distilled essence of pain, captured using special spells or items.

- **Immediate Effect**: User is stunned for 1d4 + 1 rounds, then incapacitated for 1d6 minutes
- **High**: Charisma score increases by 1d4 + 1 (max 24) for 1 hour
- **Side Effects**: Feelings of intense pleasure last for 1d4 hours
- **Overdose**: If more than one dose is taken in a 24-hour period, the user falls unconscious for 1d4 hours (DC 18 Constitution save negates)

Baccaran

This pasty substance is dried and kept as a powder or sometimes left as a paste.

- **Immediate Effect**: Strength score reduced by 1d4 for 1 hour
- **High**: Wisdom score increases by 1d4 + 1 (max 24) for 30 minutes
- **Side Effects**: Disadvantage on saving throws against illusion spells for 2d4 hours
- **Overdose**: If more than one dose is taken in a 24-hour period, the user takes 2d6 psychic damage and the side effect duration is doubled

Devilweed

Leaves from the wyssin plant are dried and rolled into a tobaccolike substance and smoked.

- **Immediate Effect**: Wisdom score reduced by 1 for 1 hour
- **High**: Strength score increases by 2 (max 22) for 1d3 hours
- **Side Effects**: Frightened condition (of nothing specific — the user is jittery and paranoid) for the duration
- **Overdose**: None

Luhix

Powdered stalks of plants that grow only in the Abyss, luhix is normally sprinkled onto a bleeding, self-inflicted wound.

- **Immediate Effect**: All ability scores reduced by 1 for 1 hour
- **High**: All ability scores increase by 2 (max 22) for 1d2 hours
- **Side Effects**: For the first minute, intense pain; the user is immune to being frightened for the duration
- **Overdose**: Those who take this drug more than once in 24 hours must succeed on a **DC 25 Constitution saving throw** or die in terrible pain

Mordayn Vapor ("Dreammist")

Made of roughly ground leaves of a rare herb found in deep forests, mordayn is so potent that it is taken by steeping a small amount in hot water, and then inhaling the vapors of the resultant tea.

- **Immediate Effect**: Exotic visions of incredible beauty enthrall the user (incapacitated) for 1d20 + 10 minutes
- **Comedown**: Constitution and Wisdom scores each reduced by 1d4 for 24 hours
- **Side Effects**: The visions are incredibly beautiful; user must succeed on a **DC 17 Wisdom saving throw** or feel compelled to repeat the dose at the next opportunity
- **Overdose**: If two doses are taken within an hour, or if raw mordayn powder or tea are ingested, the drug is a deadly poison (DC 17 Constitution save; 10d6 poison damage on a failed save, half on a success; repeated at the start of the user's next turn)

Mushroom Powder

Taken from a rare blue mushroom, this powder must be inhaled. It is popular among arcane spellcasters.

- **Immediate Effect**: Intelligence and Charisma scores each increase by 2 (max 22) for 1 hour
- **Comedown**: Strength score reduced by 1 for 24 hours
- **Side Effects**: Mild hallucinations; disadvantage on Wisdom checks for 1d4 hours, and disadvantage on Strength and Constitution checks for 2d4 hours
- **Overdose**: If more than one dose is taken in a 12-hour period, the user takes 2d6 psychic damage. Using it more than three times in any 24-hour period deals 4d6 psychic damage and paralyzes the user for 2d4 hours

Redflower Leaves

These crushed leaves of a tiny red bog flower are known for their ability to improve hand-to-eye coordination.

- **Immediate Effect**: None
- **High**: As a bonus action, the user can focus on a creature they can see. The user has advantage on the next attack roll they make against that creature within 10 minutes
- **Side Effects**: None
- **Overdose**: Taking a second dose before the first has worn off causes the poisoned condition for 1d4 × 10 minutes

Sannish

A bluish liquid distilled from wolves' milk and a powdered desert plant, this concoction is very popular. Addicts are easily found by the permanent blue stains on their lips.

- **Immediate Effect**: Wisdom score reduced by 1 for 24 hours
- **High**: The user is immune to the frightened condition and ignores the effects of exhaustion (but doesn't remove exhaustion levels) for 1d4 hours
- **Side Effects**: Euphoria; disadvantage on initiative rolls
- **Overdose**: A second dose while the first is still in effect causes the user to fall unconscious for 2d4 hours

Terran Brandy

A potent alcohol, this magical drink is favored by heartless spellcasters of all types. This green liquid is distilled from the essence of dying fey.

- **Immediate Effect**: The user's spell save DC and spell attack bonus each increase by 1 for 1d20 + 20 minutes
- **Comedown**: Constitution score reduced by 2 for 24 hours
- **Side Effects**: None
- **Overdose**: If more than one dose is taken in an 8-hour period, the user's Constitution score is immediately reduced by 1 (in addition to the comedown)

Vodare

An extremely bitter brown powder, vodare is usually mixed with honeyed water or sweet wine to dilute the taste. It is made from the crushed petals of a flower that grows only on the graves of those who dedicated their lives to the worship of Rallaster.

- **Immediate Effect**: Advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks and saving throws against the frightened condition for 1d4 hours
- **Comedown**: Disadvantage on Charisma (Persuasion) and Charisma (Deception) checks for 2d4 hours
- **Side Effects**: Mild euphoria and fierce confidence while the drug is in effect
- **Overdose**: If more than one dose is taken in a 4-hour period, the user is incapacitated for 1d4 hours (DC 15 Constitution save negates)

Drug Table

Name	Type	Save DC	Price	Crafting DC	Addiction
Agony ("liquid pain")	Ingested	18	200 gp	20	Extreme
Baccaran	Ingested	14	10 gp	15	Low
Devilweed	Inhaled	15	6 gp	15	Low
Luhix	Injury	25	2,000 gp	25	Vicious
Mordayn vapor ("dreammist")	Inhaled	17	200 gp	15	High
Mushroom powder	Inhaled	15	100 gp	20	Medium
Redflower leaves	Ingested	10	300 gp	20	Low
Sannish	Ingested	9	15 gp	15	Medium
Terran brandy	Ingested	19	500 gp	25	Low
Vodare	Ingested	13	40 gp	12	High

Using Drugs in Campaigns

Drugs can create complex social situations:

- **Addiction Plots**: Characters dealing with addiction themselves or helping others
- **Black Market**: Finding drug dealers and illegal substances
- **Investigation**: Tracking down drug sources and distribution networks
- **Moral Choices**: Deciding whether to use drugs for tactical advantages

Drugs work best when they create meaningful roleplaying opportunities rather than simple mechanical bonuses.

Poison

When a character takes damage from a poisoned weapon, touches an item smeared with contact poison, consumes poisoned food or drink, or inhales poisonous fumes, they must make a **Constitution saving throw**. On a failed save, the creature suffers the poison's effects. On a successful save, the creature typically takes half damage (if the poison deals damage) or negates the effect entirely.

Designer's Note: 5e poisons use a single saving throw rather than 3.5e's two-stage (initial/secondary) system. We've consolidated each poison into a single effect that captures the spirit of both stages. The massive creature-size-based poison tables have been condensed into tiers (minor, standard, potent, lethal) to match 5e's simpler design. Unique poisons with special effects are preserved individually.

Creating Poisons

Refining raw materials into an effective poison requires time, determination, and expertise. A character proficient with a **poisoner's kit** can craft poisons during downtime.

Poisonmaking Rules

Crafting a poison follows the standard 5e crafting rules (*PHB* Chapter 8, *Xanathar's Guide to Everything* Chapter 2) with the following notes:

Cost: Raw materials cost half the poison's market price if the character has access to the active ingredient, or the full market price if they must purchase refined components.

Time: A character can craft poison worth 50 gp per workweek (8 hours/day). The character must succeed on a poisoner's kit check against the poison's crafting DC at the end of each workweek.

Harvesting Venom: A character proficient with a poisoner's kit can attempt to harvest venom from a dead or incapacitated venomous creature. This requires a **DC 15 Dexterity check** using the poisoner's kit and takes 1d6 minutes. On a failure, the character is exposed to the creature's poison. Raw venom sells for about 1/4 of the refined poison's price on the black market.

Creature Venoms

Rather than listing every size variant, creature venoms are grouped into potency tiers:

Tier	Con Save DC	Damage	Price	Crafting DC
Minor (CR 0–1 creatures)	11	2d6 poison	75 gp	13
Standard (CR 2–5 creatures)	13–15	4d6 poison	200 gp	16
Potent (CR 6–10 creatures)	16–18	6d6 poison	500 gp	19
Deadly (CR 11–15 creatures)	19–22	8d6 poison	1,500 gp	22

Tier	Con Save DC	Damage	Price	Crafting DC
Lethal (CR 16+ creatures)	23+	10d6 poison	5,000 gp	26

On a failed save, the target also has the **poisoned** condition for 1 hour (minor/standard), 8 hours (potent), or 24 hours (deadly/lethal). Centipede venoms additionally reduce the target's speed by half. Scorpion venoms additionally impose disadvantage on Strength checks and saves. Spider venoms additionally impose disadvantage on Dexterity checks and saves.

Unique Poisons

These poisons have special effects beyond simple damage:

Poison	Type	DC	Effect	Price	Crafting DC
Bebilith venom	Injury	20	8d6 poison damage; on a failed save, the target's AC is reduced by 2 for 24 hours as the venom dissolves armor and flesh	900 gp	20
Devilseye[1]	Injury	21	4d6 poison damage; on a failed save, the target loses any Magic Resistance trait for 1 hour	1,000 gp	22
Lifebane[2]	Injury	20	6d6 vile damage (reduces hit point maximum)	2,000 gp	25
Eyeblast	Injury	22	No damage; on a failed save, the target is blinded for 1d4 hours. A successful save reduces this to 1 minute	500 gp	23
Balor bile[1]	Contact	25	8d6 poison damage; poisoned for 24 hours on a failed save	1,000 gp	25
Vilestar	Contact	24	10d6 poison damage; poisoned and incapacitated for 1 hour on a failed save	6,000 gp	30
Sasson juice	Contact	18	4d6 poison damage; speed reduced to 0 for 1 hour on a failed save	500 gp	22
Sufferfume	Inhaled	20	4d6 poison damage; all ability scores reduced by 1 for 24 hours on a failed save	1,200 gp	21
Urthanyk	Inhaled	19	6d6 poison damage; poisoned for 8 hours on a failed save	2,000 gp	26
Mist of Nourn	Inhaled	25	10d6 poison damage; 2 levels of exhaustion on a failed save	7,000 gp	30
Ishentav	Inhaled	13	4d6 poison damage; poisoned for 1 hour on a failed save	500 gp	20
Burning angel wing fumes	Inhaled	18	4d6 psychic damage; Charisma score reduced by 1d4 for 24 hours on a failed save	2,800 gp	27
Basilisk breath	Inhaled	17	6d6 poison damage; the target must repeat the save at the end of each of its turns for 1 minute; on a second failure, the target is petrified for 1 hour	2,500 gp	26

[1] Affects fiends and celestials that are normally immune to poison.
[2] Damage is vile damage (also reduces hit point maximum; see Chapter 2: Evil Effects).

Psychic Poisons

Psychic poisons are a particular sort of intentional curse bestowed upon a creature, object, or area, almost always the result of the *psychic poison* spell (see Chapter 6). Psychic poisons are used as traps in the same way that a contact poison might be used on a chest full of valuables.

If a spellcaster casts a spell with the divination or enchantment school at an object or area affected by psychic poison, or at a creature within a poisoned area, the caster must make an immediate **Wisdom saving throw** (DC determined by the *psychic poison* spell). Casters who fail their saves are affected by the psychic poison.

Psychic Poison Table

Poison	Target	Effect on Failed Save	Min. Spell Level
Darin-tasith	Creature	4d6 psychic damage; Intelligence reduced by 1d4 for 24 hours	4th
Karadrach	Creature	4d6 psychic damage; Wisdom reduced by 1d4 for 24 hours	4th
Estadrach	Creature	6d6 psychic damage; Wisdom reduced by 1d6 for 24 hours	5th
Stradda	Creature or object	4d6 psychic damage; Charisma reduced by 1d4 for 24 hours	4th
Nishita	Object	4d6 psychic damage; Intelligence reduced by 1d4 for 24 hours	4th
Vashita	Object	4d6 psychic damage; Wisdom reduced by 1d4 for 24 hours	4th
Lanshita	Object	8d6 psychic damage; Charisma reduced by 1d6 for 24 hours	6th
Blue unlyn	Area	4d6 psychic damage; Intelligence reduced by 1d4 for 24 hours	4th
Red unlyn	Area	4d6 psychic damage; Wisdom reduced by 1d4 for 24 hours	4th
Amber unlyn	Area	4d6 psychic damage; Charisma reduced by 1d4 for 24 hours	4th
Violet unlyn	Area	6d6 psychic damage; Intelligence reduced by 1d6 for 24 hours	5th
Black unlyn	Area	8d6 psychic damage; Int, Wis, and Cha each reduced by 1d4 for 24 hours	7th

Using Poisons in Campaigns

Poisons can create tactical challenges:

- **Discovery**: Finding rare poisons and antidotes
- **Crafting**: Learning to create custom poisons
- **Protection**: Defending against poison attacks
- **Investigation**: Tracking down poison sources

Poisons work best when they're rare and dangerous, creating tension and tactical depth rather than being common combat tools.

Material Components

Certain special components are required for the casting of evil spells. If a particular component is not mentioned in the table below, its price is negligible and the component is a part of the caster's component pouch.

For an extra 10 gp, any material component can be magically preserved using the *gentle repose* spell or similar magic, retarding normal decay and decomposition for up to 10 days.

Evil Spell Components

Component	Price	Component	Price
Agony (liquid pain)	200 gp	Humanoid eye	2 cp
Beast brain fluid	3 sp	Humanoid finger	1 cp
Bit of lycanthrope fur or skin	7 sp	Humanoid hand	3 cp
Bit of ochre jelly or gray ooze	5 sp	Humanoid heart	1 sp
Chromatic dragon heart	6 gp	Metallic dragon heart	7 gp
Demon flesh	5 gp	Soul in larval form	250 gp
Demon heart	18 gp	Soul in receptacle	200 gp
Devil's heart	20 gp	Tongue of creature capable of speech	3 cp
Feather of an intelligent creature	20 gp	Vial of humanoid blood	3 cp
Humanoid bone	1 cp	Vrock feather (only one usable per fiend)	1 gp
Humanoid brain	4 cp	Yugoloth's brain	5 gp

Optional Components

Some evil spell components are optional. These components can increase the potency of an evil spell; the component is consumed whether it helps or not. A spellcaster can use only one optional component in the casting of an evil spell.

As with any spell component, the caster must be holding an optional evil spell component for it to function. These optional components can only be applied to spells that deal necrotic damage or that were learned from an evil source (DM's discretion).

Designer's Note: The original 3.5e optional components used percentage-based chances (e.g., "30% chance to deal extra damage"). Random chance on top of a spell is fiddly in play. We've converted these to guaranteed but smaller effects, or to effects that trigger on specific conditions (like a failed save). This makes them more reliable and worth the cost of acquiring horrific components.

Component Effects

Agony (Liquid Pain)

Pain in distilled liquid form. When used as an additional component, the spell's save DC increases by 1. This increase doesn't stack with other applications of liquid pain.

Chromatic Dragon Heart

If the spell deals damage and the target is a good-aligned creature, the spell deals an additional 2d6 necrotic damage. The heart must be from a dragon of CR 15 or higher, and it must be dried and hardened into a gemlike object.

Demon's Heart

The spell deals an additional 1d6 damage (same type as the spell). The heart must be from a demon of CR 6 or higher, and it must be dried and hardened into a rocklike object.

Devil's Heart

If the caster prepares spells, there is a chance the spell slot is not expended. After casting the spell, roll a d20. On a 20, the spell slot is retained. The heart must be from a devil of CR 6 or higher, and it must be dried and hardened into a rocklike object.

Humanoid Heart

The spell's save DC increases by 1. The heart must be intact and well preserved (still bloody).

Humanoid Brain

The spell's range is doubled (if the spell has a range of at least 5 feet). The brain must be intact and fresh (or preserved).

Humanoid Child's Eye

The spell's duration is doubled (if the spell has a duration of at least 1 minute). The eye must be intact and fresh (or preserved).

Humanoid Finger

If the spell requires a spell attack roll, the caster gains a +2 bonus to that roll. The finger must be intact and well preserved (still bloody).

Metallic Dragon Heart

The spell's save DC increases by 1. The heart must be from a dragon of CR 15 or higher, and it must be dried and hardened into a gemlike object.

Soul in Larval Form

The spell's save DC increases by 2. Souls in larval form are usually found naturally only on one of the Lower Planes. **Using this component destroys the soul permanently — an act of unspeakable evil.**

Soul in Receptacle

The target has disadvantage on its saving throw against the spell. Souls in receptacles normally result from the use of spells such as *soul cage*, *imprisonment*, or *trap the soul*. **Using this component destroys the soul permanently — an act of unspeakable evil.**

Yugoloth's Brain

Roll a d20 after casting the spell. On a 19–20, the target has no saving throw against the spell's effect. On a 1, the spell also affects the caster (no saving throw). The brain must be from a yugoloth (or some other neutral evil fiend) of CR 10 or higher, and it must be dried and powdered.

Using Material Components in Campaigns

These components can create quest opportunities:

- **Acquisition**: Seeking rare and dangerous components
- **Ethics**: Dealing with the morality of using humanoid parts
- **Black Market**: Finding sources for forbidden materials
- **Crafting**: Creating custom spells with special components

Material components work best when they're rare and meaningful, creating adventure hooks rather than being simple shopping list items.

Chapter 4: Feats

General Feats

These feats are available to any character or creature who meets the prerequisites. Many are designed for monsters and NPCs with innate spellcasting, though some are suitable for player characters in evil-aligned campaigns.

Boost Innate Spellcasting

Prerequisite: Innate Spellcasting trait

One of the creature's innately cast spells becomes harder to resist.

- Choose one spell you can cast innately. The saving throw DC for that spell increases by 2.
- You can select this feat multiple times, choosing a different innate spell each time.

Boost Magic Resistance

Prerequisite: Any evil alignment, Magic Resistance trait or innate spell resistance

By making a deal with an evil power, the creature becomes even more resistant to magic.

- You have advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects. (If you already have Magic Resistance, you can instead treat a roll of 9 or lower on such saving throws as a 10, once per long rest.)

Corrupt Innate Spellcasting

Prerequisite: Any evil alignment, Innate Spellcasting trait

One of the creature's innately cast spells is powered by evil. A dark pact provides the creature with unholy energy.

- Choose one innate spell that deals damage. When you cast it, half the damage dealt (rounded down) becomes necrotic damage. Creatures that are immune to the spell's original damage type still take the necrotic portion.
- You can use this corruption a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus per long rest.
- You can select this feat multiple times, choosing a different innate spell each time.

Empower Innate Spellcasting

Prerequisite: Innate Spellcasting trait

The creature can use an innately cast spell with greater effect.

- Choose one innate spell with variable numeric effects (damage dice, healing, number of targets, etc.). When you cast it, you can empower it so that all variable numeric effects are increased by half (round down). For example, an empowered spell that deals 4d6 damage deals 4d6 + 2d6 damage instead.
- You can empower an innate spell a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus per long rest.
- You can select this feat multiple times, choosing a different innate spell each time.

Malign Spell Focus

Prerequisite: Any evil alignment, the ability to cast at least one spell

The character's evil spells are more potent than normal due to a deal with an evil power.

- The saving throw DC for any spell you cast that has the evil descriptor (or deals necrotic damage and was learned from an evil source) increases by 2.

Mortalbane

Prerequisite: Innate Spellcasting trait

The creature can make an innately cast spell particularly deadly to mortals.

- When you cast an innate spell that deals damage, you can add 2d6 damage to the spell when targeting creatures that are not celestials, fiends, or undead. Against celestials, fiends, undead, and constructs, the spell instead deals only half damage.
- You can use this ability a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus per long rest.

Poison Immunity

Prerequisite: None

After prolonged exposure to a poison or toxin, the character has rendered themselves immune to it.

- You are immune to one specific poison (chosen when you take this feat), whether a blade poison, the venom of a specific creature, or another toxin.
- You have advantage on saving throws against the poisoned condition from other sources.
- You can select this feat multiple times, choosing a different poison each time. The advantage on other poison saves does not stack.

Quicken Innate Spellcasting

Prerequisite: Innate Spellcasting trait

The creature can use an innately cast spell with a moment's thought.

- Choose one innate spell that has a casting time of 1 action. You can cast it as a bonus action instead. You can do this once per long rest.
- You can't cast another spell during the same turn, except for a cantrip with a casting time of 1 action.

- You can select this feat multiple times, choosing a different innate spell each time, or choosing the same spell to gain one additional use per long rest.

Violate Innate Spellcasting

Prerequisite: Any evil alignment, Innate Spellcasting trait

The creature's innately cast spells are particularly tainted with evil.

- Choose one innate spell that deals damage. When you cast it, half the damage dealt (rounded down) becomes vile damage. Vile damage reduces the target's hit point maximum by the same amount until the target finishes a long rest. Creatures immune to the spell's original damage type take no damage.
- You can use this ability a number of times equal to half your proficiency bonus (rounded up) per long rest.
- You can select this feat multiple times, choosing a different innate spell each time.

Using General Feats in Campaigns

These feats can enhance evil characters:

- **Spellcasters**: Focus on Corrupt Innate Spellcasting and Malign Spell Focus
- **Monsters**: Use innate spellcasting feats to customize creatures
- **NPCs**: Create specialized evil antagonists with unique spell modifications
- **Players**: Offer Poison Immunity and Malign Spell Focus as options for evil-aligned characters

General feats work best when they're balanced and serve clear mechanical purposes while maintaining the evil flavor.

Metamagic Feats

These feats modify spells, adding evil effects or increasing their power through dark pacts. In 5e, metamagic is primarily a Sorcerer class feature, but these feats allow any spellcaster to apply dark metamagic to their spells — at a cost.

Designer's Note: These feats function similarly to the Metamagic Adept feat from *Tasha's Cauldron of Everything*, but are themed around evil magic. They require expending a higher-level spell slot, mirroring the 3.5e cost of using a slot one level higher.

Corrupt Spell

Prerequisite: Any evil alignment, the ability to cast at least one spell that deals damage

You can transform your spells into things of evil due to a deal you make with an evil power.

- When you cast a spell that deals damage, you can corrupt it by expending a spell slot one level higher than the spell normally requires. Half the damage dealt (rounded down) becomes necrotic damage. Creatures immune to the spell's original damage type still take the necrotic portion.
- For example, a corrupted *fireball* cast using a 4th-level slot deals 8d6 damage: 4d6 fire damage and 4d6 necrotic damage. A creature immune to fire still takes 4d6 necrotic damage.

Violate Spell

Prerequisite: Any evil alignment, the ability to cast at least one spell that deals damage

You can transform your spells so that the wounds they inflict are tainted with the foulest evil.

- When you cast a spell that deals damage, you can violate it by expending a spell slot one level higher than the spell normally requires. Half the damage dealt (rounded down) becomes vile damage. Vile damage reduces the target's hit point maximum by the same amount until the target finishes a long rest. Creatures immune to the spell's original damage type take no damage from a violated spell.
- For example, a violated *lightning bolt* cast using a 4th-level slot deals 8d6 damage: 4d6 lightning damage and 4d6 vile lightning damage. A creature immune to lightning takes no damage at all.

Using Metamagic Feats in Campaigns

These feats can create interesting spellcasting options:

- **Evil Casters**: Core feats for evil-aligned spellcasters
- **Spell Research**: Characters seeking to corrupt existing spells
- **Dark Pacts**: Feats gained through bargains with evil powers
- **Moral Consequences**: The cost of using corrupted magic — casting with a higher slot represents the toll of channeling evil

Metamagic feats work best when they offer meaningful mechanical advantages while reinforcing the evil theme of the character.

Vile Feats

Only intelligent characters of an evil alignment can use vile feats. Vile feats are granted to characters at the behest of a powerful evil agency — a god, a demon, or something similar. As such, vile feats are supernatural abilities.

Some DMs may also want to require a character who seeks a vile feat to perform a special ritual or make an actual bargain with a powerful creature of evil. The patron creature may even (at the DM's discretion) have the ability to revoke the feat should the character displease it.

Designer's Note: Vile feats are inherently supernatural. Unlike standard 5e feats, they are granted by evil patrons and can be revoked. They function well as rewards for dark pacts, warlock-style bargains, or story milestones in evil campaigns. All vile feats require evil alignment unless otherwise noted.

Dark Speech

Prerequisite: Any evil alignment, Intelligence 15+, Charisma 15+

You learn a smattering of the language of truly dark power.

- You can use the Dark Speech to bring loathing and fear to others, to help cast evil spells and create evil magic items, and to weaken physical objects (see Dark Speech in Chapter 2).

- You have advantage on saving throws made when someone uses the Dark Speech against you.
- Attempting to utter a word of the Dark Speech always ends in immediate death for a speaker who does not have this feat. It is impossible to make someone use the Dark Speech if they are unwilling, because the language's pronunciation is so exacting.

Disciple of Darkness

Prerequisite: Any evil alignment

You formally supplicate yourself to an archdevil. In return for this obedience, you gain a small measure of power.

- Once per long rest, while performing an evil act, you can call upon your diabolic patron to gain advantage on any one ability check, attack roll, or saving throw.
- You cannot also have the Thrall to Demon feat. You are bound to a single archdevil patron.

Evil Brand

Prerequisite: Any evil alignment

You are physically marked forever as a servant of an evil power greater than yourself.

- Evil creatures automatically recognize the symbol emblazoned upon you as a sign of your depravity or discipleship to a powerful patron, though the specific identity of the patron is not revealed.
- You have advantage on Charisma (Persuasion) and Charisma (Intimidation) checks made against evil-aligned creatures.

Lichloved

Prerequisite: Evil Brand feat

Through repeated and perverse communion with the undead, you gain dread powers.

- Mindless undead do not attack you unless commanded to do so or unless you attack them first.
- You have advantage on saving throws against being charmed, frightened, poisoned, paralyzed, or stunned, and against disease.

Sacrificial Mastery

Prerequisite: Any evil alignment, Wisdom 15+

You are skilled at offering living sacrifices to evil gods or fiends.

- You have advantage on Intelligence (Religion) checks made when performing a sacrifice or dark ritual.
- When you perform a sacrifice as described in Chapter 2, you can add your proficiency bonus to the result an additional time.

Thrall to Demon

Prerequisite: Any evil alignment

You formally supplicate yourself to a demon lord. In return for your obedience, you gain a small measure of power.

- Once per long rest, while performing an evil act, you can call upon your demonic patron to gain advantage on any one ability check, attack roll, or saving throw.
- You cannot also have the Disciple of Darkness feat. You are bound to a single demon lord patron.

Verminfriend

Prerequisite: Any evil alignment, Charisma 13+

Vermin regard you better than they would normally.

- When a beast of CR 1/4 or lower (insects, rats, spiders, and similar vermin) is about to attack you, you can use your reaction to make a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check. On a success, that creature will not attack you for 24 hours.
- You can communicate simple ideas (hunger, danger, direction) to insects, arachnids, and similar vermin, though they cannot speak back.

Vile Ki Strike

Prerequisite: Any evil alignment, Charisma 13+, proficiency in unarmed strikes or the Martial Arts feature

You can focus evil power into your unarmed strikes.

- Once per turn, when you hit a creature with an unarmed strike, you deal an extra 1d4 necrotic damage. This is vile damage — it also reduces the target's hit point maximum by the same amount (see Vile Damage, Ch. 2). This reduction lasts until the creature receives healing while in a *hallow* area, or is targeted by *greater restoration* or *heal*.

Vile Martial Strike

Prerequisite: Any evil alignment, Charisma 13+

You can focus evil power into your weapon blows.

- Choose one type of weapon when you take this feat. Once per turn, when you hit a creature with that weapon, you deal an extra 1d4 necrotic damage. This is vile damage — it also reduces the target's hit point maximum by the same amount (see Vile Damage, Ch. 2). This reduction lasts until the creature receives healing while in a *hallow* area, or is targeted by *greater restoration* or *heal*.
- You can select this feat multiple times, choosing a different weapon type each time.

Vile Natural Attack

Prerequisite: Any evil alignment, a natural weapon attack that deals at least 1d8 damage

You can focus evil power into your natural attacks.

- Once per turn, when you hit a creature with a natural weapon attack, you deal an extra 1d4 necrotic damage. This is vile damage — it also reduces the target's hit point maximum by the same amount (see Vile Damage, Ch. 2). This reduction lasts until the creature receives healing while in a *hallow* area, or is targeted by *greater restoration* or *heal*.

Willing Deformity

Prerequisite: Any evil alignment

Through scarification, self-mutilation, and supplication to dark powers, you intentionally mar your own body.

- You gain proficiency in the Intimidation skill. If you are already proficient, you gain expertise (double your proficiency bonus) in Intimidation instead.
- This feat is a prerequisite for all Deformity feats (see Chapter 4: Deformity Feats).

Using Vile Feats in Campaigns

Vile feats can create compelling evil characters:

- **Character Development**: Feats gained through dark bargains
- **Plot Hooks**: Patrons demanding service in exchange for power
- **Moral Complexity**: The cost of seeking power through evil means
- **Roleplaying**: Physical marks and supernatural abilities affecting interactions

Vile feats work best when they're meaningful choices with clear consequences, enhancing both mechanics and roleplaying opportunities.

Deformity Feats

These vile feats require the character to intentionally mar their own body through self-mutilation, scarification, and supplication to dark powers. All require the Willing Deformity feat as a prerequisite.

Designer's Note: Deformity feats are a unique category of vile feats that trade physical normalcy for supernatural power. They are excellent for villains and NPCs, and can be offered to evil PCs as dark rewards. Each carries a visible physical cost that affects social interactions.

Willing Deformity

Prerequisite: Any evil alignment

Through scarification, self-mutilation, and supplication to dark powers, you intentionally mar your own body.

- You gain proficiency in the Intimidation skill. If you are already proficient, you gain expertise (double your proficiency bonus) in Intimidation instead.
- This feat is a prerequisite for all other Deformity feats.

Deformity (Clawed Hands)

Prerequisite: Willing Deformity feat

Because of intentional self-mutilation, you have deformed arms and hands ending in sharp claws.

- Your unarmed strikes deal 1d6 slashing damage instead of the normal bludgeoning damage.
- Your claws count as natural weapons. You are never considered unarmed.
- Once per turn, when you take the Attack action and hit with an unarmed strike, you can make one additional unarmed strike as part of the same action (this does not stack with Flurry of Blows or other features that grant extra unarmed strikes).

Deformity (Eyes)

Prerequisite: Willing Deformity feat

You have either drilled a hole in your forehead trying to add a third eye, or you have supernaturally scarred one of your regular eyes.

- You can cast *see invisibility* on yourself without expending a spell slot or material components. The spell lasts for 1 minute when cast this way. Once you use this ability, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.
- **Drawback**: You have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight and on Intelligence (Investigation) checks to search an area visually.

Deformity (Face)

Prerequisite: Willing Deformity feat

Because of intentional self-mutilation, you have a hideous face.

- You have advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks.
- You have advantage on Charisma (Persuasion) checks made against evil-aligned creatures of a different creature type than your own (e.g., a human with this feat has advantage on Persuasion checks against fiends).

Deformity (Gaunt)

Prerequisite: Willing Deformity feat

Through intentional starvation and macabre operations, you are grossly underweight. You have a skeletal appearance, and your weight is now half normal for creatures of your kind.

- Your Dexterity score increases by 2, to a maximum of 22.
- Your Constitution score decreases by 2, to a minimum of 3.

- You have advantage on checks made to escape a grapple or restraints (including Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks and checks to escape manacles or rope bindings).
- **Restriction**: You cannot also have the Deformity (Obese) feat.

Deformity (Obese)

Prerequisite: Willing Deformity feat

Through intentional gorging and general gluttony, you are obese. Grossly overweight, you are now at least triple the normal weight for creatures of your kind.

- Your Constitution score increases by 2, to a maximum of 22.
- Your Dexterity score decreases by 2, to a minimum of 3.
- You have advantage on saving throws against poison and the poisoned condition.
- **Restriction**: You cannot also have the Deformity (Gaunt) feat.

Using Deformity Feats in Campaigns

Deformity feats can create memorable characters:

- **Visual Storytelling**: Physical manifestations of evil corruption
- **Character Background**: Self-mutilation as part of dark initiation
- **Social Interaction**: How deformities affect NPC reactions
- **Mechanical Trade-offs**: Benefits balanced against penalties

Deformity feats work best when they're meaningful choices that enhance both roleplaying and mechanics, creating characters who visually embody their evil nature.

Chapter 5: Prestige Classes

Cancer Mage — Roguish Archetype

Scurrying about in sewers, back alleys, and abandoned buildings, the cancer mage feeds upon the corpse of society. The cancer mage hides in the darkness where no one wants to look, digging through trash long forgotten. Cancer mages are some of the most disgusting individuals a character is ever likely to meet, for they revel in filth, disease, and decay.

Designer's Note: The 3.5e cancer mage was a prestige class with rogue-like features (sneak attack, stealth focus) combined with disease mechanics. In 5e, it becomes a **Roguish Archetype** for the Rogue class, gaining subclass features at 3rd, 9th, 13th, and 17th level. The disease-spreading and vermin themes are preserved through 5e mechanics.

Integrating into an existing character: A rogue who contracts a disease and survives it — or who spends time in sewers, plague wards, or near vile diseases — might discover an unnatural affinity for pestilence. At level 3, the rogue stops getting sick and starts *becoming* sickness. For a rogue past level 3, *TCoE* retraining (p. 10 — swap your subclass at any level-up with DM approval) works well after a disease encounter: the rogue catches something terrible, nearly dies, and comes back changed — immune to disease and able to spread it. This is a great arc for a rogue who was

already morally gray and tips into darkness. Pairs well with the Grave Robber background and drug/poison content from Chapter 3.

Roguish Archetype: Cancer Mage

Prerequisites (Optional)

The DM may require that a character must have contracted and survived a disease before choosing this archetype.

Cancer Mage Features

Rogue Level	Feature
3rd	Disease Host, Tatterdemalion
9th	Cancerous Companion
13th	Infected Wound
17th	Disease Form

Disease Host

3rd-level Cancer Mage feature

You become a living host for disease. You gain the following benefits:

- You are **immune to disease**.
- You are **resistant to poison damage** and have advantage on saving throws against the poisoned condition.
- You can carry up to 3 diseases simultaneously without suffering their effects. As an action, you can touch a creature and force it to make a **Constitution saving throw** (DC = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier) or contract one disease you carry. You choose which disease to transmit.

Tatterdemalion

3rd-level Cancer Mage feature

You can spend 10 minutes creating makeshift armor from rags, refuse, and filth. This **tatterdemalion armor** has the following properties:

- AC equals 13 + your Dexterity modifier
- No disadvantage on Stealth checks
- Weighs 5 lb.
- Lasts until you doff it or create a new set
- Any creature other than you that touches the armor must succeed on a **DC 12 Constitution saving throw** or be poisoned for 1 minute

Cancerous Companion

9th-level Cancer Mage feature

You grow a semi-sentient cancerous tumor somewhere on your body. The companion has blindsight out to 30 feet and alerts you to hidden creatures, granting you the following benefits:

- You cannot be surprised while conscious.

- You have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on senses other than sight.
- As a bonus action, you can command the companion to spit a glob of diseased matter at a creature within 15 feet. The target must succeed on a **Constitution saving throw** (same DC as Disease Host) or be poisoned until the end of its next turn. You can use this feature a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, regaining all uses on a long rest.

Infected Wound

13th-level Cancer Mage feature

Your Sneak Attack damage becomes infectious. When you deal Sneak Attack damage to a creature, it must succeed on a **Constitution saving throw** (same DC as Disease Host) or contract a disease of your choice from the following:

- **Filth Fever**: The creature has disadvantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws for 24 hours.
- **Sewer Plague**: The creature gains 1 level of exhaustion that lasts for 24 hours.
- **Blinding Sickness**: The creature has disadvantage on Wisdom checks and Wisdom saving throws, and is blinded, for 24 hours.

A creature that succeeds on the save is immune to your Infected Wound for 24 hours. The disease can be cured by *lesser restoration* or similar magic.

Disease Form

17th-level Cancer Mage feature

As an action, you can transform into a **swarm of disease-carrying vermin** (use the **swarm of insects** stat block, *MM* p. 338, with the following modifications):

- You retain your Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores.
- You retain your class features, including Sneak Attack.
- You are immune to disease and poison damage.
- Any creature that starts its turn in your space must succeed on a **Constitution saving throw** (same DC as Disease Host) or contract a random disease (DM's choice).
- You can revert to your normal form as a bonus action.

You can use this feature once per long rest. The transformation lasts up to 10 minutes.

Using Cancer Mages in Campaigns

Cancer mages make excellent villains:

- **Urban Adventures**: Sewer-dwelling disease spreaders
- **Plague Plots**: Masters of biological warfare
- **Horror Elements**: Disgusting and memorable antagonists
- **Disease Mysteries**: Tracking down plague sources

Cancer mages work best when they're truly repulsive and dangerous, creating both physical and moral challenges for players.

Demonologist — Warlock Otherworldly Patron

Demonologists study and bargain with demons more generally, rather than binding themselves to a particular patron demon prince. They seek power through demonic pacts and forbidden knowledge, often at great personal cost.

Designer's Note: The 3.5e demonologist was a prestige class focused on summoning and bargaining with demons. In 5e, the Fiend warlock patron (*PHB*) already covers a general fiendish pact. This subclass — **The Demon Prince** — is a more specific variant that focuses on demonic summoning and abyssal knowledge, distinct from the broader Fiend patron. DMs may use this as an alternative to or alongside the Fiend patron.

Integrating into an existing character: Warlocks choose their patron at level 1, so this is best for new characters or replacement PCs. For an existing warlock who wants to switch patrons, *TCoE* retraining (p. 10 — swap your subclass at any level-up with DM approval and a story justification) allows it — the story trigger should be dramatic: your old patron is destroyed or betrays you, and a demon prince swoops in to claim the contract. Alternatively, a non-warlock PC can multiclass into warlock (requires Cha 13) — the pact happens in-fiction when the character encounters a demon lord or visits the Abyss. Even 1 level of warlock gives the expanded spell list and patron feature. See Homebrew Warlock Options for additional invocations and the expanded Fiend patron spell list that pairs with this patron.

Otherworldly Patron: The Demon Prince

Your patron is a demon prince of the Abyss — not a specific named lord, but the raw, chaotic power of demonkind itself channeled through whichever demon prince currently holds sway over your soul.

Expanded Spell List

The Demon Prince lets you choose from an expanded list of spells when you learn a warlock spell. The following spells are added to the warlock spell list for you.

Spell Level	Spells
1st	*protection from evil and good*, *inflict wounds*
2nd	*enlarge/reduce*, *shatter*
3rd	*summon lesser demons*†, *fear*
4th	*summon greater demon*†, *confusion*
5th	*infernal calling*†, *contact other plane*

†From *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*

Demonic Knowledge

1st-level Demon Prince feature

You gain proficiency in Intelligence (Arcana) if you don't already have it. You have advantage on Intelligence checks related to demons, the Abyss, and demonic cults. You learn to speak, read, and write Abyssal.

Additionally, when you make an Intelligence (Arcana) or Intelligence (Religion) check to recall information about a fiend, you can add double your proficiency bonus to the check instead of your normal proficiency bonus.

Pact of Chaos

6th-level Demon Prince feature

When you cast a spell that summons or conjures a fiend, the summoned creature gains temporary hit points equal to your warlock level and has advantage on its first attack roll.

Additionally, when a fiend you summoned deals damage to a creature, you can regain hit points equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum 1). You can benefit from this healing once per round, and a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus per long rest.

Demonic Resilience

10th-level Demon Prince feature

The abyssal energy flowing through you grants you the following benefits:

- You have resistance to poison damage and advantage on saving throws against the poisoned condition.
- You have advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened by fiends.
- When you are reduced to 0 hit points, you can choose to drop to 1 hit point instead. Your appearance becomes briefly demonic (horns, red eyes, etc.) for 1 minute. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

Demon Binding

14th-level Demon Prince feature

You can perform a 1-minute ritual to bind a fiend of CR 10 or lower that you can see within 30 feet. The fiend must succeed on a **Charisma saving throw** against your warlock spell save DC or be bound to your service for 24 hours. While bound, the fiend obeys your verbal commands and cannot willingly harm you. If you issue no commands, the fiend defends itself but takes no other actions.

You can have only one fiend bound at a time. If you bind a new fiend, the previous binding ends. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

Using Demonologists in Campaigns

Demonologists serve as excellent antagonists:

- **Summoning Encounters**: Complex battles with multiple demons
- **Knowledge Brokers**: Sources of forbidden lore
- **Pact Stories**: Characters dealing with the consequences of demonic bargains
- **Cult Leaders**: Heads of demon-worshipping organizations

Demonologists work best when they're intelligent, dangerous, and have complex relationships with their demonic allies.

Diabolist — Warlock Otherworldly Patron

Diabolists study and bargain with devils, seeking power through infernal contracts and legalistic pacts. Unlike demonologists who deal with chaotic demons, diabolists navigate the complex hierarchies and laws of Hell to gain advantage.

Designer's Note: The 3.5e diabolist was a prestige class focused on devil summoning and infernal contracts. In 5e, this becomes the **Infernal Contract** warlock patron — distinct from the broader Fiend patron by its emphasis on legalistic bargaining, contract magic, and hellfire rather than raw destructive power.

Integrating into an existing character: Like the Demonologist, this is a level-1 warlock choice — best for new characters. For multiclassing, any PC with Cha 13 can take a warlock level after signing an infernal contract in-game. Use the Dark Bargain Worksheet to formalize the deal. The contract itself is the pact — the character doesn't need to be evil, just desperate or ambitious enough to sign. This is one of the easiest subclasses to introduce mid-campaign because the story hook writes itself: a devil offers the PC exactly what they need, and the price is "just a signature." Pairs perfectly with the Infernal Contractor background. See Demon Lords and Archdevils for patron lore.

Otherworldly Patron: The Infernal Contract

Your patron is not a single devil but the binding power of infernal law itself — the ancient contractual magic that governs the Nine Hells. Through study and negotiation, you have learned to tap into this power directly.

Expanded Spell List

The Infernal Contract lets you choose from an expanded list of spells when you learn a warlock spell.

Spell Level	Spells
1st	*command*, *detect magic*
2nd	*zone of truth*, *suggestion*
3rd	*tongues*, *glyph of warding*
4th	*banishment*, *compulsion*
5th	*geas*, *planar binding*

Infernal Scribe

1st-level Infernal Contract feature

You gain proficiency in Intelligence (Arcana) and one of the following: calligrapher's supplies, forgery kit, or one language (Infernal). If you already have these proficiencies, you gain proficiency in another skill of your choice.

You can create **infernal contracts** — magical documents that bind willing signatories to specific terms. Creating a contract takes 1 hour and requires calligrapher's supplies. A creature that willingly signs the contract is bound by the *geas* spell (no saving throw, no concentration) for the duration specified in the contract (maximum 30 days at 1st level, increasing to 1 year at 10th level, and permanent at 14th level). The contract can specify one task or prohibition.

The signatory must be **truly willing** — a creature that is charmed, frightened, magically compelled, or otherwise not acting of its own free will cannot be bound by an infernal contract. If such a creature signs, the contract fails and crumbles to ash. The creature must understand the terms of the contract (you must explain them truthfully, though you may use legalese and loopholes).

You can have a number of active contracts equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum 1), but only **one** of these can be a permanent (14th-level) contract at a time. *Greater restoration* or *wish* can end any infernal contract. A creature that dies while under contract has its soul claimed by your patron (see Chapter 2: Evil Effects).

Hellfire Resilience

6th-level Infernal Contract feature

You gain resistance to fire damage. When you would take fire damage, you can use your reaction to gain immunity to fire damage until the start of your next turn. Once you use this reaction, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Additionally, when you deal fire damage with a warlock spell, you can choose to deal hellfire damage instead. Hellfire damage ignores resistance to fire damage (but not immunity).

Contract Enforcement

10th-level Infernal Contract feature

When a creature bound by one of your infernal contracts violates its terms, you immediately become aware of the violation and gain the following benefits for 1 hour:

- You know the exact location of the violator.
- You have advantage on attack rolls and ability checks against the violator.
- The violator has disadvantage on saving throws against your spells.

Additionally, you can use an action to impose a curse on a contract violator you can see within 60 feet (as the *bestow curse* spell, no concentration, Charisma saving throw against your spell save DC). Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

Infernal Authority

14th-level Infernal Contract feature

You can invoke the full weight of infernal law. As an action, you can force one fiend of CR 15 or lower that you can see within 60 feet to make a **Charisma saving throw** against your warlock spell save DC. On a failure, the fiend is charmed by you for 1 hour and must obey your commands, as long as those commands don't violate infernal law (DM's discretion). On a success, the fiend is immune to this feature for 24 hours.

Additionally, you can cast *planar binding* once without expending a spell slot or material components. Once you do so, you can't do so again until you finish a long rest.

Using Diabolists in Campaigns

Diabolists make sophisticated villains:

- **Contract Killers**: Using infernal contracts to eliminate targets
- **Legal Manipulators**: Exploiting loopholes in magical and mundane law
- **Power Brokers**: Middlemen for infernal deals
- **Cult Leaders**: Organized devil-worshipping hierarchies

Diabolists work best when they're intelligent, organized, and use their legalistic nature to create complex moral and ethical dilemmas.

Thralls and Disciples — Cleric Divine Domain

Thralls and disciples are servants of specific archfiends — demon princes and archdevils. Unlike general demonologists and diabolists, these characters bind themselves to a particular patron in exchange for power and favor.

Designer's Note: In 3.5e, thralls and disciples were prestige classes for divine casters who served specific archfiends. In 5e, this becomes the **Archfiend Domain** for the Cleric class — representing a cleric who worships a demon prince or archdevil as their deity. This is thematically appropriate since many archfiends accept worship and grant divine power. The domain features are intentionally flexible, with patron-specific options.

Integrating into an existing character: Clerics choose their domain at level 1, so this is best for new characters. For an existing cleric, a domain change is a major story event — the cleric's original deity abandons them (or is killed/weakened), and an archfiend steps in to fill the void. Use *TCoE* retraining (p. 10 — swap your subclass at any level-up with DM approval and a story justification). The cleric doesn't need to be willing — some archfiends are subtle, and the cleric might not realize their prayers are being answered by Asmodeus instead of their original god until it's too late. For multiclassing, any PC with Wis 13 can take a cleric level — the archfiend reaches out and offers divine power in exchange for service. Even 1 level gives the domain spells and Channel Divinity. Pairs with the Cult Initiate background. See Demon Lords and Archdevils for patron lore.

Divine Domain: Archfiend

You serve a specific archfiend — a demon prince or archdevil — as your deity. Your patron grants you power in exchange for service, worship, and advancing their goals on the Material Plane.

Patron Selection

When you choose this domain, select your archfiend patron. This determines your domain spells and your 1st-level Patron Gift:

Patron	Alignment	Domain Spells (1st/3rd/5th/7th/9th)
Orcus	CE	*false life*, *ray of enfeeblement* / *animate dead*, *speak with dead* / *blight*, *death ward* / *antilife shell*, *raise dead*† / *create undead*, *harm*
Demogorgon	CE	*dissonant whispers*, *Tasha's hideous laughter* / *crown of madness*, *suggestion* / *fear*, *hunger of Hadar* / *confusion*, *phantasmal killer* / *dominate person*, *mislead*
Juiblex	CE	*grease*, *ray of sickness* / *Melf's acid arrow*, *web* / *stinking cloud*, *slow* / *vitriolic sphere*, *Evard's black tentacles* / *cloudkill*, *contagion*
Asmodeus	LE	*command*, *charm person* / *suggestion*, *zone of truth* / *tongues*, *counterspell* / *compulsion*, *banishment* / *dominate person*, *geas*
Mephistopheles	LE	*burning hands*, *detect magic* / *scorching ray*, *see invisibility* / *fireball*, *counterspell* / *fire shield*, *wall of fire* / *immolation*, *scrying*
Dispater	LE	*shield of faith*, *sanctuary* / *heat metal*, *arcane lock* / *magic circle*, *glyph of warding* / *fabricate*, *stoneskin* / *wall of force*, *legend lore*

†Raises as undead loyal to Orcus, not truly alive.

Patron Gift

1st-level Archfiend Domain feature

Your patron grants you a supernatural gift based on their nature:

- **Orcus**: You learn the *chill touch* cantrip. Undead you create with spells have +1 AC and +1 to attack rolls.
- **Demogorgon**: You learn the *minor illusion* cantrip. You have advantage on saving throws against the charmed and frightened conditions.
- **Juiblex**: You learn the *acid splash* cantrip. You have resistance to acid damage.
- **Asmodeus**: You learn the *friends* cantrip. You gain proficiency in Charisma (Deception) and Charisma (Persuasion).
- **Mephistopheles**: You learn the *fire bolt* cantrip. You have resistance to fire damage.
- **Dispater**: You learn the *mending* cantrip. You gain proficiency with heavy armor and smith's tools.

Channel Divinity: Archfiend's Wrath

2nd-level Archfiend Domain feature

You can use your Channel Divinity to invoke your patron's destructive power. As an action, you present your unholy symbol and choose one creature you can see within 30 feet. That creature must make a **Wisdom saving throw**. On a failure, the creature takes necrotic damage equal to 2d10 + your cleric level and is frightened of you until the end of your next turn. On a success, the creature takes half damage and isn't frightened.

Patron's Favor

6th-level Archfiend Domain feature

Your patron rewards your faithful service. You can cast one of your domain spells without expending a spell slot. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

Additionally, you can communicate with your patron through a 10-minute ritual (as the *commune* spell, but you contact your archfiend patron instead of a deity). You can use this ritual once per long rest.

Divine Strike

8th-level Archfiend Domain feature

You gain the ability to infuse your weapon strikes with fiendish energy. Once on each of your turns when you hit a creature with a weapon attack, you can cause the attack to deal an extra 1d8 necrotic damage. When you reach 14th level, the extra damage increases to 2d8.

Archfiend's Champion

17th-level Archfiend Domain feature

Your patron elevates you to the rank of champion. You gain the following benefits:

- You gain resistance to necrotic damage and one additional damage type based on your patron (fire for Mephistopheles, acid for Juiblex, psychic for Demogorgon, cold for Orcus, fire for Asmodeus, bludgeoning/piercing/slashing from nonmagical attacks for Dispater).
- You can summon a fiend associated with your patron (CR 5 or lower) once per long rest. The fiend appears in an unoccupied space within 30 feet, obeys your commands, and remains for 1 hour or until destroyed.
- Your patron shields you from divine retribution. You have advantage on saving throws against spells cast by good-aligned creatures.

Restrictions

- Cannot serve multiple patrons
- Cannot switch patrons without severe consequences (loss of all domain features until a new patron is chosen through a special ritual)
- Must follow their patron's alignment and goals
- May be punished for failing their patron (DM's discretion — loss of features for 1d4 days)

Using Thralls and Disciples in Campaigns

These characters serve as excellent antagonists:

- **Direct Agents**: Serving their patron's interests on the Material Plane
- **Cult Leaders**: Organizing worship of their archfiend patron

- **Power Brokers**: Dealing in favors and infernal politics
- **Rival Servants**: Competing with other servants of the same or different patrons

Thralls and disciples work best when they have clear motivations tied to their patron's goals and create complex political situations.

Vermin Lord — Druid Circle

Vermin lords curry favor with insects and other pests, gaining power over the creatures that most civilized beings despise. They find strength in the swarms and colonies of vermin that infest the world's dark corners.

Designer's Note: The 3.5e vermin lord was a prestige class focused on commanding vermin and swarms. In 5e, this becomes the **Circle of Vermin** for the Druid class. Wild Shape is repurposed to transform into swarms rather than individual beasts, and the circle's features focus on commanding and empowering vermin.

Integrating into an existing character: Druids choose their circle at level 2. A druid who spends time in blighted lands, sewers, or plague-ridden areas might find their connection to nature shifting from "protector of the wild" to "master of the things that thrive in decay." The trigger could be a failed attempt to cure a plague (the druid realizes the vermin are *winning* and decides to join them), exposure to a malign site, or a dark vision from a corrupted nature spirit. For *TCoE* retraining (p. 10 — swap your subclass at any level-up with DM approval), the druid's Wild Shape starts producing insects and rats instead of wolves and bears — a creeping change that the druid might not even notice at first. Pairs well with evil druid spells and the disease rules from Chapter 2.

Druid Circle: Circle of Vermin

Circle of Vermin Features

Druid Level	Feature
2nd	Vermin Command, Swarm Shape
6th	Plague Carrier
10th	Hive Mind
14th	Vermin Apotheosis

Vermin Command

2nd-level Circle of Vermin feature

You can communicate telepathically with insects, arachnids, and other vermin within 60 feet. You can issue simple commands to vermin (approach, flee, attack, guard), and they are not hostile to you unless magically compelled.

You gain resistance to poison damage and are immune to disease.

Swarm Shape

2nd-level Circle of Vermin feature

You can use your Wild Shape to transform into a **swarm of insects** (*MM* p. 338) or a **swarm of spiders** instead of a beast. At 6th level, you can also transform into a **swarm of centipedes** or **swarm of wasps**. While in swarm form:

- You retain your Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores.

- You can cast spells that require only verbal components.
- You can occupy another creature's space and vice versa.
- You can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny insect.
- You retain your druid class features.

Plague Carrier

6th-level Circle of Vermin feature

Your vermin servants become vectors for disease. When you are in swarm form and a creature starts its turn in your space, or when a swarm you have summoned damages a creature, the target must succeed on a **Constitution saving throw** against your druid spell save DC or contract a disease of your choice (sewer plague, sight rot, or filth fever — see *DMG* Chapter 8).

Additionally, you can cast *insect plague* once without expending a spell slot. You regain this ability when you finish a long rest.

Hive Mind

10th-level Circle of Vermin feature

You can extend your consciousness into vermin within 120 feet, creating a network of tiny spies. You gain the following benefits:

- You have blindsight out to 30 feet (sensing through nearby vermin).
- You cannot be surprised while there are vermin within 60 feet of you.
- As an action, you can see and hear through any vermin within 1 mile for up to 10 minutes (concentration). You are blind and deaf to your own surroundings while doing so.
- When you cast a spell with a range of touch, you can deliver the spell through any vermin within 120 feet that you can sense through your Hive Mind.

Vermin Apotheosis

14th-level Circle of Vermin feature

You become one with the swarm. You gain the following permanent benefits:

- You are immune to poison damage and the poisoned condition.
- You can use your Wild Shape to become a **swarm of insects** as a bonus action (instead of an action).
- While in swarm form, you have resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.
- As an action, you can summon 1d4 **swarms of insects** in unoccupied spaces within 30 feet. They obey your telepathic commands and last for 1 hour or until destroyed. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

Using Vermin Lords in Campaigns

Vermin lords create unique challenges:

- **Urban Blight**: Masters of city-wide infestations
- **Plague Masters**: Spreading disease through vermin armies
- **Swarm Battles**: Complex encounters with multiple vermin types
- **Underground Threats**: Sewer-dwelling menaces

Vermin lords work best when they're truly alien in their thinking and use their vermin servants in creative, horrifying ways.

Warrior of Darkness — Fighter Martial Archetype

Warriors of darkness use black magic to improve their combat prowess. They blend martial skill with dark magic, creating deadly combinations that make them formidable opponents on the battlefield.

Designer's Note: The 3.5e warrior of darkness was a prestige class for martial characters who augmented their fighting with dark magic. In 5e, this becomes a **Martial Archetype** for the Fighter class, similar in structure to the Eldritch Knight but focused on necrotic/shadow magic rather than abjuration/evocation. Features arrive at 3rd, 7th, 10th, 15th, and 18th level.

Integrating into an existing character: Fighters choose their archetype at level 3. A fighter who picks up a cursed weapon, serves under an evil warlord, or is exposed to vile damage might find dark power seeping into their combat style. For *TCoE* retraining (p. 10 — swap your subclass at any level-up with DM approval), the transition is gradual — the fighter's attacks start trailing shadow, their eyes darken, and they feel stronger in dim light. This works especially well for a Battle Master or Champion who wants more supernatural flavor. For multiclassing *into* fighter, any martial character with Str or Dex 13 can take 3 fighter levels — the dark power manifests through combat training under a villainous mentor or through a dark gift.

Martial Archetype: Warrior of Darkness

Warrior of Darkness Features

Fighter Level	Feature
3rd	Dark Weaponry, Dark Sight
7th	Fear Aura
10th	Dark Armor
15th	Soul Stealing
18th	Final Strike

Dark Weaponry

3rd-level Warrior of Darkness feature

You learn to channel dark energy through your weapons. Once per turn, when you hit a creature with a weapon attack, you can deal an extra 1d6 necrotic damage. This damage increases to 1d8 at 10th level and 2d6 at 18th level.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, regaining all uses when you finish a long rest.

Dark Sight

3rd-level Warrior of Darkness feature

You gain darkvision out to 60 feet if you don't already have it. If you already have darkvision, its range increases by 30 feet. You can see normally in magical darkness out to 30 feet.

Fear Aura

7th-level Warrior of Darkness feature

You emanate an aura of menace. As a bonus action, you can activate your fear aura for 1 minute. Each hostile creature that starts its turn within 10 feet of you must succeed on a **Wisdom saving throw** (DC = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier) or be frightened of you until the start of its next turn. A creature that succeeds on the save is immune to your Fear Aura for 24 hours.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, regaining all uses when you finish a long rest.

Dark Armor

10th-level Warrior of Darkness feature

As a bonus action, you can shroud yourself in shadows. For 1 minute, you gain the following benefits:

- You have resistance to necrotic damage.
- You have advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks.
- When a creature hits you with a melee attack, it takes necrotic damage equal to your proficiency bonus.

You can use this feature twice, regaining all uses when you finish a long rest.

Soul Stealing

15th-level Warrior of Darkness feature

When you reduce a hostile creature to 0 hit points, you can absorb a fragment of its life force. You gain temporary hit points equal to your fighter level + your Constitution modifier. These temporary hit points last for 1 hour.

Additionally, while you have these temporary hit points, your weapon attacks deal an extra 1d6 necrotic damage (this stacks with Dark Weaponry).

Final Strike

18th-level Warrior of Darkness feature

You can channel all your dark power into a single devastating attack. When you hit a creature with a weapon attack, you can use this feature to deal an extra 6d10 necrotic damage. This damage is vile damage — it also reduces the target's hit point maximum by the same amount (see Chapter 2: Evil Effects).

If this damage reduces the creature to 0 hit points, its soul is consumed. The creature can only be restored to life by *wish* or *true resurrection*.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

Using Warriors of Darkness in Campaigns

Warriors of darkness serve as elite combatants:

- **Elite Guards**: Protecting important evil NPCs or locations
- **Mercenary Leaders**: Leading bands of evil warriors

- **Duel Champions**: Champions of evil causes in formal combat
- **Dark Knights**: Fallen paladins or corrupted warriors

Warriors of darkness work best when they're skilled combatants who use their dark magic tactically, creating challenging martial encounters with magical elements.

Ur-Priest — Cleric Divine Domain

Ur-priests siphon spells from the gods themselves, bypassing normal divine channels to steal divine power directly. They are heretics who reject the traditional relationship between deities and their followers, taking what they believe is rightfully theirs by force of will.

Designer's Note: The 3.5e ur-priest was a prestige class that gained divine spells without worshipping a deity — essentially stealing from the gods. In 5e, this becomes the **Divine Theft Domain** for the Cleric class. Mechanically, the ur-priest is a cleric who has no deity but still channels divine power through sheer will and forbidden knowledge. This is a deeply heretical concept that should create excellent story tension.

Integrating into an existing character: This is one of the most dramatic mid-campaign transitions possible. A cleric who loses faith — perhaps their god fails to answer a prayer at a critical moment, or they discover their deity is complicit in something terrible — might decide to *take* divine power rather than ask for it. For *TCoE* retraining (p. 10 — swap your subclass at any level-up with DM approval), the cleric's prayers stop being prayers and become *demands*. Their holy symbol cracks but still works. Other clerics sense something wrong. This is a slow-burn corruption arc that can play out over multiple sessions before the mechanical switch happens. For multiclassing, any PC with Wis 13 can take cleric levels — the character studies forbidden texts and learns to siphon divine energy directly. This is the hardest subclass to justify as "not evil" — stealing from the gods is inherently transgressive.

Divine Domain: Divine Theft

You serve no god. Instead, you have learned the forbidden art of siphoning divine energy directly from the weave of divine power that connects deities to the mortal world. Every spell you cast is stolen from the gods themselves.

Domain Spells

Cleric Level	Spells
1st	*detect magic*, *identify*
3rd	*silence*, *nystul's magic aura*
5th	*counterspell*, *dispel magic*
7th	*arcane eye*, *Mordenkainen's private sanctum*
9th	*antimagic field*†, *legend lore*

†When cast by an ur-priest, *antimagic field* only suppresses divine magic (not arcane or other sources). The DM may rule that it functions normally at their discretion.

Divine Siphon

1st-level Divine Theft feature

You gain proficiency in Intelligence (Arcana) in addition to the normal cleric proficiencies. You don't need a holy symbol as a spellcasting focus — your force of will serves as your focus.

When you see a creature within 60 feet cast a divine spell (cleric, druid, paladin, or ranger spell), you can use your reaction to attempt to siphon some of that power. Make an Intelligence (Arcana) check against a DC of 10 + the spell's level. On a success, you regain one expended spell slot of a level equal to or lower than the spell cast. The original spell is not affected.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum 1), regaining all uses when you finish a long rest.

Channel Divinity: Steal Power

2nd-level Divine Theft feature

You can use your Channel Divinity to drain divine energy from another spellcaster. As an action, choose one creature you can see within 30 feet that has the Spellcasting or Innate Spellcasting feature. The target must succeed on a **Charisma saving throw** or lose one spell slot of the highest level it has available (the DM determines which slot for monsters with Innate Spellcasting). You regain one expended spell slot of a level equal to or lower than the stolen slot.

God Resistance

6th-level Divine Theft feature

Your defiance of the divine grants you supernatural resilience. You have advantage on saving throws against spells and effects from divine spellcasters (clerics, druids, paladins, and rangers).

Additionally, you can cast *detect magic* at will, without expending a spell slot. When you do, you can specifically identify whether detected magic is divine, arcane, or another source.

Divine Strike

8th-level Divine Theft feature

You gain the ability to infuse your weapon strikes with stolen divine energy. Once on each of your turns when you hit a creature with a weapon attack, you can cause the attack to deal an extra 1d8 force damage. When you reach 14th level, the extra damage increases to 2d8.

Ultimate Theft

17th-level Divine Theft feature

Your mastery of divine siphoning reaches its apex. You gain the following benefits:

- **Spell Theft.** When you succeed on a saving throw against a spell cast by a divine spellcaster, you can use your reaction to steal the spell. You can cast that spell once within the next minute using your own spell slots. You don't need to know the spell or have it on your spell list.
- **Divine Immunity.** You are immune to the *divine word* spell and similar effects that target creatures based on their relationship (or lack thereof) with a deity.
- **Power Drain.** Once per long rest, as an action, you can target a divine spellcaster within 60 feet. The target must succeed on a **Charisma saving throw** or have all its spell slots of 5th level or lower expended. You regain a number of expended spell slots with a combined level equal to half the total levels of slots drained (rounded down).

Using Ur-Priests in Campaigns

Ur-priests create theological conflicts:

- **Heretical Cults**: Leading movements against established religions
- **Power Thieves**: Stealing divine artifacts and power sources
- **Divine Enemies**: Making enemies of established churches and gods
- **Moral Questions**: Challenging players' views on divine power and religion

Ur-priests work best when they create genuine theological dilemmas and force players to question the nature of divine power and its rightful use.

Chapter 6: Magic

Evil Spells

This chapter contains evil spells that expand the options available to evil characters. These spells often come with terrible costs, both to the caster and their victims, reflecting the corrupting nature of evil magic.

Designer's Note: 5e doesn't use spell descriptors like [Evil]. Instead, we treat "evil spells" as a narrative category — spells that are inherently tied to evil power sources, dark gods, or fiendish energy. A DM can rule that casting these spells is an evil act, that *detect evil and good* reveals their residue, and that a paladin's Divine Sense can detect their lingering aura. The spell lists below are organized by 5e class. The Oathbreaker spell list is available to Oathbreaker paladins (*DMG* p. 97).

What Makes Magic Evil?

5e doesn't formally tag spells as "evil," but the spells in this book are considered evil because they do one or more of the following things:

- They cause undue suffering or negative emotions
- They call upon evil gods or fiendish energies
- They create, summon, or enhance undead or other evil creatures
- They harm or trap souls
- They involve unsavory practices such as cannibalism or drug use

What's Evil?

Some would point out that a *fireball* spell is likely to cause undue suffering, and it could be used to kill a group of orphans. Does that make *fireball* an evil spell?

Fireball, by itself, simply creates a blast of fire. Fire can be used for evil purposes, but it is not inherently evil. Contrasted with a spell such as *shriveling*, whose only purpose and only possible use is to wither the flesh of another living creature in a painful and debilitating fashion, it becomes easier to see why *shriveling* is an evil spell.

The judgment cannot be based solely on effect. Your campaign could, for example, have a spell called *vitality leech* that calls upon a demon to drain a target's Strength for a short time. The spell's effect is only slightly different from *ray of enfeeblement*, but the approach and execution are very different. *Vitality leech* is an evil spell, while *ray of enfeeblement* is not. Although the ultimate game effect is similar, the character in the game world faced with the two spells undoubtedly regards them differently. Tapping into evil power is an evil act in and of itself, no matter what the effects or the reason for using the power might be.

By this definition, as a variant rule, the following spells from the *Player's Handbook* should be considered evil: *contagion*, *finger of death*, *create undead*, *animate dead*, and *imprisonment*.

Corrupt Magic

Those who delve into black magic have learned of exceedingly evil spells that, in exchange for foul power, take a terrible toll on the caster. These spells are known as **corrupt spells**. Their numbers are few, but they are truly horrible applications of magic.

Any spellcaster can learn and cast corrupt spells, provided they can access the spell (through a spellbook, scroll, or dark patron). Corrupt spells use normal spell slots but have an additional **corruption cost** — typically exhaustion levels, hit point maximum reduction, or ability score reduction — that is paid when the spell's duration expires.

Designer's Note: In 3.5e, corrupt spells cost ability damage/drain and were restricted to prepared casters. In 5e, we've opened them to all casters (since the prepared/spontaneous distinction is less rigid) and replaced ability damage with exhaustion or HP max reduction — mechanics that already exist in 5e and create meaningful consequences without tracking separate damage pools.

If a corrupt spell is cast from a scroll or other magic item, the user pays the corruption cost, not the creator. This corruption cost is mentioned in each spell's description and is paid each time the spell is used.

Corrupt spells are not specific to any class spell list. They can appear on any class's list, as noted in the spell descriptions. A divine caster casting a corrupt spell casts it as a divine spell, and an arcane caster casts it as an arcane spell.

Types of Evil Magic

Corrupt Spells

Spells that draw power from the caster's own body or mind in exchange for foul power. They always have a corruption cost.

Demonic/Infernal Magic

Spells that call upon or channel the power of demons and devils. These often have chaotic (demonic) or lawful (infernal) themes.

Necromantic Evil

Spells that manipulate death, undeath, and necrotic energy in particularly horrific ways.

Mind-Affecting Evil

Spells that destroy or pervert the minds of victims in cruel ways. These typically use Wisdom or Charisma saving throws.

Body Horror

Spells that physically mutate, deform, or destroy victims' bodies. These typically use Constitution saving throws.

Using Evil Spells in Campaigns

Evil spells create memorable encounters:

- **Villain Arsenal**: Give evil casters unique and terrifying options
- **Moral Dilemmas**: Players might be tempted to use evil magic for good reasons
- **Investigation**: Tracking down the source of unusual magical effects
- **Corruption Stories**: Characters dealing with the consequences of using evil magic

Evil spells work best when they're not just mechanically different but also thematically disturbing, creating genuine horror and moral complexity.

Bard Spells

Bards who turn to evil often use their musical and performance abilities to corrupt, manipulate, and destroy. Their spells focus on emotional manipulation, addiction, and spreading despair.

Designer's Note: In 5e, bards learn spells from the bard spell list and can use Magical Secrets to learn spells from other lists. The spells below are additions to the bard spell list for campaigns using this book. Each spell uses standard 5e formatting. See Appendix F for the complete consolidated spell list across all classes.

How to learn these spells: Bards learn spells at level-up (Spells Known, *PHB* p. 53 — bards pick from their class list when they gain a level; they can also swap one known spell at each level-up). Add these to the available bard spell list. A bard can also learn any of these via **Magical Secrets** at levels 10, 14, and 18. See Campaign Integration Guide for mid-campaign introduction.

Related homebrew: College of Requiem subclass pairs well with these spells.

Evil Bard Spell List

Cantrips

- *Slash Tongue*

1st Level

- *Cheat*
- *Extract Drug*
- *No Light*
- *Sorrow*

2nd Level

- *Addiction*
- *Song of Festering Death*
- *Wave of Grief*

3rd Level

- *Curse of the Putrid Husk*
- *Sadism*
- *Stunning Screech*

5th Level

- *Morality Undone*
- *Soul Shackles*

7th Level

- *Wave of Pain*

Spell Descriptions

Cheat

1st-level divination (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 bonus action
- **Range**: Self
- **Components**: S
- **Duration**: 1 hour

For the duration, you can reroll any ability check made as part of a game of chance or a contest of skill. You must use the new roll. You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum 1), after which the spell ends.

Extract Drug

1st-level transmutation (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 minute
- **Range**: Touch
- **Components**: V, S, M (an inanimate organic object worth at least 1 sp)
- **Duration**: Instantaneous

You transmute an inanimate organic object into one dose of a drug of your choice (see Chapter 3: Drugs). You must be familiar with the drug. The drug retains its potency for 24 hours, after which it becomes inert.

No Light

1st-level evocation (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: 60 feet
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You create a 20-foot-radius sphere of supernatural darkness centered on a point within range. Nonmagical light cannot illuminate the area, and dim light within the area is extinguished. This functions as the *darkness* spell, except it can be dispelled by any spell that creates light of 2nd level or higher.

Sorrow

1st-level enchantment (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: 60 feet
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You fill one creature you can see within range with overwhelming sadness. The target must succeed on a **Wisdom saving throw** or have disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws for the duration. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.

Addiction

2nd-level enchantment (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: Touch
- **Components**: V, S, M (a dose of the drug)
- **Duration**: Instantaneous

You touch a creature and force it to become addicted to a specific drug. The target must succeed on a **Constitution saving throw** or become addicted to the drug as if it had failed its addiction saving throw (see Chapter 3: Drugs). The addiction level is one step higher than the drug's normal addiction rating.

Song of Festering Death

2nd-level necromancy (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: 60 feet
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You sing a horrific melody targeting one creature you can see within range. At the start of each of the target's turns, it must succeed on a **Constitution saving throw** or take 2d6 necrotic damage. On a successful save, the spell ends.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d6 for each slot level above 2nd.

Wave of Grief

2nd-level enchantment (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: Self (30-foot cone)
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: 1 round

A wave of despair washes over creatures in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in the area must succeed on a **Wisdom saving throw** or have disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws until the end of your next turn.

Curse of the Putrid Husk

3rd-level necromancy (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action

- **Range**: 60 feet
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: Instantaneous

You curse one creature you can see within range with a vision of its own decomposing body. The target must succeed on a **Wisdom saving throw** or fall unconscious for 1d10 minutes. The target can be awakened by taking damage or by another creature using an action to shake it awake. When the target awakens, it is frightened of you for 1 minute.

Sadism

3rd-level enchantment (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 bonus action
- **Range**: Self
- **Components**: V
- **Duration**: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You draw dark pleasure from inflicting pain. For the duration, whenever you deal damage to a hostile creature, you gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws (maximum +3). This bonus resets to 0 if you end a turn without dealing damage.

Stunning Screech

3rd-level evocation (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: Self (30-foot radius)
- **Components**: V
- **Duration**: Instantaneous

You emit a piercing, unholy screech. Each creature within 30 feet of you that can hear you must succeed on a **Constitution saving throw** or be stunned until the end of your next turn.

Morality Undone

5th-level enchantment (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 hour
- **Range**: Touch
- **Components**: V, S, M (a black sapphire worth at least 500 gp, which the spell consumes)
- **Duration**: Permanent
- **Corruption Cost**: 2 levels of exhaustion

You permanently twist a creature's moral compass. The target must be willing or incapacitated. The target's alignment shifts to evil (the lawful/chaotic axis is unchanged). A *greater restoration*, *heal*, or *wish* spell can reverse this effect within 30 days. After 30 days, only *wish* can undo it.

Soul Shackles

5th-level necromancy (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 minute
- **Range**: Touch
- **Components**: V, S, M (a talisman worth at least 100 gp)

- **Duration**: Until dispelled

You bind the soul of a creature that died within the last minute to a talisman you hold. While the soul is bound, you can use an action to compel it to answer one question truthfully (as *speak with dead*, but the soul has full knowledge of its life). The soul can attempt a **Charisma saving throw** to resist each question. Destroying the talisman frees the soul. *Dispel evil and good* also frees the soul.

Wave of Pain

7th-level evocation (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: Self (60-foot cone)
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: Instantaneous

A wave of agonizing pain sweeps through a 60-foot cone. Each creature in the area must succeed on a **Constitution saving throw** or be stunned for 1d4 rounds. On a successful save, the creature is incapacitated until the end of its next turn.

Using Evil Bard Spells in Campaigns

Evil bards create psychological horror:

- **Performance Terror**: Using music as a weapon
- **Social Manipulation**: Corrupting communities through performance
- **Addiction Plots**: Spreading drugs and dependence (see *addiction* spell + Ch. 3)
- **Emotional Warfare**: Using despair and sorrow as weapons

Evil bard spells work best when they pervert the bard's normal role of bringing joy and inspiration, instead bringing corruption and despair.

See also: Cleric Spells, Sorcerer/Wizard/Warlock Spells, Homebrew Additional Spells

---

Oathbreaker Paladin Spells

Oathbreaker paladins, as fallen champions of dark powers, use corrupted divine magic that focuses on destruction, pain, and unholy power. Their spells reflect their martial nature and their service to dark gods and fiends.

Designer's Note: In 3.5e, the "blackguard" was a prestige class. In 5e, the **Oathbreaker** paladin (*DMG* p. 97) fills this role. The spells below are additions to the Oathbreaker's spell list. Some are also available to other classes as noted. See Appendix F for the complete consolidated spell list.

How to learn these spells: Oathbreaker paladins prepare spells from the full paladin list (*DMG* p. 97 — the Oathbreaker is an official evil paladin subclass with its own oath spells and Channel Divinity options). Add these to the available paladin spell list for Oathbreakers. Paladins gain spell slots at level 2 (*PHB* p. 83 — they prepare a number of spells equal to Cha mod + half paladin level each long rest). See Campaign Integration Guide for mid-campaign introduction.

Evil Oathbreaker Spell List

1st Level

- *Boneblast*
- *Death Grimace*
- *Demonflesh*

2nd Level

- *Boneblade*
- *Demoncall*
- *Devil's Eye*

3rd Level

- *Abyssal Might*
- *Demon Wings*
- *Hell's Power*
- *Masochism*

4th Level

- *Claws of the Savage*
- *Vile Lance*

Spell Descriptions

Boneblast

1st-level necromancy (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: 60 feet
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: Instantaneous

You cause the bones within a creature you can see to splinter and crack. The target must succeed on a **Constitution saving throw** or take 2d6 necrotic damage and have its speed reduced by 10 feet until the end of its next turn. On a successful save, the target takes half damage and its speed is unaffected.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d6 for each slot level above 1st.

Death Grimace

1st-level necromancy (evil, ritual)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: Touch
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: Until dispelled

You touch a corpse and leave a magical "calling card" — the face contorts into a specific expression of your choosing (a grin, a scream, a symbol). The grimace is visible to all and can be recognized by anyone who has seen your mark before (Intelligence (Investigation) DC 10). The grimace persists even through *gentle repose* and similar preservation magic.

Demonflesh

1st-level transmutation (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 bonus action
- **Range**: Self
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: Concentration, up to 1 hour

Your skin toughens and takes on a leathery, demonic texture. You gain a +2 bonus to AC for the duration. This bonus does not stack with a shield or the *shield of faith* spell.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the AC bonus increases by 1 for every two slot levels above 1st (maximum +4).

Boneblade

2nd-level transmutation (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: Touch
- **Components**: V, S, M (a bone from a humanoid)
- **Duration**: 1 hour

You transform a humanoid bone into a magical weapon of your choice (any simple or martial melee weapon). The weapon has a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls and deals an extra 1d4 necrotic damage on a hit. The weapon crumbles to dust when the spell ends.

Demoncall

2nd-level divination (evil, ritual)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: Self
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: 10 minutes

You open your mind to fiendish knowledge. For the duration, you have advantage on Intelligence (Arcana), Intelligence (Religion), and Intelligence checks related to fiends, the Abyss, or the Nine Hells.

Devil's Eye

2nd-level divination (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: Self
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: Concentration, up to 1 hour

You gain the ability to see normally in both magical and nonmagical darkness to a distance of 30 feet. This functions as truesight with respect to darkness only.

Abyssal Might

3rd-level transmutation (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 bonus action
- **Range**: Self
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You channel abyssal power into your body. For the duration, your Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution scores each increase by 2 (to a maximum of 22), and you have advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Corruption Cost: When the spell ends, you gain 1 level of exhaustion.

Demon Wings

3rd-level transmutation (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: Self
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

Leathery, bat-like wings sprout from your back. You gain a flying speed equal to your walking speed for the duration. When the spell ends, if you are still airborne, you fall.

Hell's Power

3rd-level abjuration (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 bonus action
- **Range**: Self
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Infernal energy reinforces your defenses. For the duration, you gain a +2 bonus to AC and resistance to one damage type of your choice (fire, cold, lightning, or poison).

Masochism

3rd-level enchantment (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 bonus action
- **Range**: Self
- **Components**: V
- **Duration**: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You draw dark power from your own suffering. For the duration, whenever you take damage from a hostile creature, you gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws (maximum +3). This bonus resets to 0 if you end a turn without having taken damage since your last turn.

Claws of the Savage

4th-level transmutation (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: Touch
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

A willing creature you touch grows vicious claws. For the duration, the target's unarmed strikes deal 2d6 slashing damage, are considered magical, and the target can make an unarmed strike as a bonus action on each of its turns.

Vile Lance

4th-level conjuration (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 bonus action
- **Range**: Self
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: Concentration, up to 1 hour

You conjure a lance of solidified evil energy. It functions as a *+2 spear* that deals an extra 1d8 necrotic damage on a hit. This necrotic damage is vile damage — it also reduces the target's hit point maximum by the same amount (see Chapter 2: Evil Effects). The lance vanishes when the spell ends.

Using Evil Oathbreaker Spells in Campaigns

Evil Oathbreaker paladins create martial horror:

- **Fallen Heroes**: Former paladins using their powers for evil
- **Unholy Champions**: Warriors empowered by dark gods
- **Pain Warriors**: Using self-harm to power their abilities
- **Demonic Transformation**: Gradually becoming more demonic

Evil Oathbreaker spells work best when they corrupt the paladin's holy abilities, turning healing into harm and protection into offense.

See also: Bard Spells, Cleric Spells, Sorcerer/Wizard/Warlock Spells, Homebrew Additional Spells

---

Cleric Spells

Evil clerics channel divine power for destructive and corrupting purposes. Their spells focus on pain, disease, undeath, and the perversion of natural processes.

Designer's Note: These spells are additions to the cleric spell list for campaigns using this book. Many are thematically appropriate for Death domain, Grave domain (twisted), or homebrew evil domains. Some spells that appeared on the 3.5e cleric list already exist in 5e (e.g., *contagion*) and are not duplicated here. See Appendix F for the complete consolidated spell list.

How to learn these spells: Clerics prepare spells from the full cleric list each day (*PHB* p. 58 — clerics prepare a number of spells equal to Wis mod + cleric level after each long rest, choosing from the entire cleric spell list). Add

these to the available cleric spell list — they become available immediately at the appropriate spell level. Pairs well with Archfiend Domain and Divine Theft Domain subclasses. See Campaign Integration Guide for mid-campaign introduction.

Evil Cleric Spell List

Cantrips

- *No Light* (see Bard Spells)
- *Preserve Organ*
- *Slash Tongue*

1st Level

- *Angry Ache*
- *Drug Resistance*
- *Extract Drug* (see Bard Spells)
- *Heartache*
- *Sacrificial Skill*
- *Slow Consumption*
- *Sorrow* (see Bard Spells)
- *Spider Hand*
- *Stupor*
- *Suspend Disease*
- *Tongue of Baalzebul*

2nd Level

- *Addiction* (see Bard Spells)
- *Boneblast* (see Oathbreaker Spells)
- *Dance of Ruin*
- *Darkbolt*
- *Sap Strength*
- *Spider Legs*
- *Spores of the Vrock*

3rd Level

- *Befoul*

4th Level

- *Pox*

6th Level

- *Insanity*

Spell Descriptions

Preserve Organ

Necromancy cantrip (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: Touch
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: 24 hours

You touch one detached organ or body part (no larger than a human head). For the duration, the organ does not decay and remains viable for use as a spell component, transplant, or ritual element.

Slash Tongue

Enchantment cantrip (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: 60 feet
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: 1 round

You speak a word of vicious spite at one creature you can see within range. The target must succeed on a **Wisdom saving throw** or have disadvantage on the next attack roll, ability check, or saving throw it makes before the end of its next turn.

Angry Ache

1st-level necromancy (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: 60 feet
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You inflict distracting pain on one creature you can see within range. The target must succeed on a **Constitution saving throw** or have disadvantage on attack rolls for the duration. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.

Drug Resistance

1st-level abjuration (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: Touch
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: 8 hours

A willing creature you touch becomes immune to the addictive properties of drugs for the duration. The creature automatically succeeds on Constitution saving throws against addiction (see Chapter 3: Drugs). This does not cure existing addictions.

Heartache

1st-level enchantment (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action

- **Range**: 60 feet
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: 1 round

You fill a creature's heart with sudden, overwhelming emotional anguish. The target must succeed on a **Wisdom saving throw** or be incapacitated until the end of your next turn as it is wracked with grief and pain.

Sacrificial Skill

1st-level divination (evil, ritual)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: Self
- **Components**: V, S, M (a drop of blood)
- **Duration**: 1 hour

You gain dark insight into the art of sacrifice. For the duration, you gain a +5 bonus to Intelligence (Religion) checks made as part of a sacrifice ritual (see Chapter 2: Sacrifice).

Slow Consumption

1st-level necromancy (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: Touch
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: 8 hours

You touch an incapacitated or restrained creature. For the duration, you drain sustenance from the target. At the end of each hour, the target takes 1d4 necrotic damage (which cannot be reduced), and you regain hit points equal to the damage dealt. The target does not need to eat or drink for the duration, but neither do you.

Spider Hand

1st-level transmutation (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: Self
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: Concentration, up to 1 hour

One of your hands detaches and transforms into a Tiny spider under your control. You can see through its eyes and hear through its senses. The spider has AC 12, 1 hit point, a walking speed of 20 feet, and a climbing speed of 20 feet. It can squeeze through spaces as small as 1 inch. If the spider is destroyed, your hand regrows when the spell ends, but you take 2d6 necrotic damage.

Stupor

1st-level enchantment (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: Touch
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: Concentration, up to 8 hours

You touch an incapacitated creature. For the duration, the target can walk and perform simple physical actions (following a path, carrying objects) but cannot take actions, bonus actions, or reactions, and cannot speak or cast spells. The target appears dazed and compliant. A creature can repeat the saving throw if it takes damage, ending the effect on a success.

Suspend Disease

1st-level abjuration (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: Touch
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: 24 hours

You touch a diseased creature. For the duration, the disease's effects are suppressed — the creature suffers no symptoms and need not make saving throws against the disease. The disease is not cured; when the spell ends, the disease resumes where it left off.

Tongue of Baalzebul

1st-level enchantment (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: Self
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: 1 hour

Your voice takes on a honeyed, persuasive quality infused with infernal charm. For the duration, you gain a +2 bonus to Charisma (Deception), Charisma (Persuasion), and Charisma (Intimidation) checks.

Dance of Ruin

2nd-level evocation (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: Self (20-foot radius)
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: Instantaneous

You channel destructive demonic energy in a wild, terrible dance. Each non-fiend creature within 20 feet of you must make a **Constitution saving throw**, taking 4d6 necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. Fiends in the area are unaffected.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the damage increases by 2d6 for each slot level above 2nd.

Darkbolt

2nd-level evocation (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: 120 feet
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: Instantaneous

You hurl a bolt of dark energy at a creature you can see within range. Make a ranged spell attack. On a hit, the target takes 3d8 necrotic damage and must succeed on a **Constitution saving throw** or be stunned until the end of its next turn.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d8 for each slot level above 2nd.

Sap Strength

2nd-level necromancy (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: 60 feet
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You drain the vitality from one creature you can see within range. The target must succeed on a **Constitution saving throw** or gain 2 levels of exhaustion for the duration. When the spell ends, the exhaustion levels from this spell are removed.

Spider Legs

2nd-level transmutation (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: Self
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

Long, chitinous spider legs sprout from your torso. For the duration, you gain a climbing speed equal to your walking speed and can move along vertical surfaces and upside down on ceilings without needing to make ability checks.

Spores of the Vrock

2nd-level conjuration (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: Self (5-foot radius)
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You release a cloud of toxic demonic spores in a 5-foot radius around you. Each creature that starts its turn in the area or enters it for the first time on its turn must succeed on a **Constitution saving throw** or take 1d8 poison damage. On a failed save, the creature also takes 1d4 poison damage at the start of each of its turns for 1 minute (no concentration required for the ongoing damage). A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the ongoing damage on a success.

Befoul

3rd-level transmutation (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: 120 feet
- **Components**: V, S, M (a drop of poison)

- **Duration**: Instantaneous

You corrupt a body of water you can see within range. Up to 1,000 gallons of water (roughly a 10-foot cube) becomes poisonous. Any creature that drinks the water must succeed on a **DC 15 Constitution saving throw** or be poisoned for 24 hours and take 3d6 poison damage. The water remains poisonous for 7 days or until purified by *purify food and drink* or similar magic.

Pox

4th-level necromancy (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: 60 feet
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: Instantaneous

You unleash a wave of supernatural disease. Choose up to 5 creatures you can see within range. Each target must succeed on a **Constitution saving throw** or take 4d8 necrotic damage and have its Constitution score reduced by 1d4 until it finishes a long rest. On a successful save, the target takes half damage and its Constitution is unaffected.

Insanity

6th-level enchantment (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: 120 feet
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: Until dispelled

You shatter the mind of one creature you can see within range. The target must succeed on a **Wisdom saving throw** or be affected as by the *confusion* spell permanently (no concentration required). The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns if it takes damage, ending the effect on a success. Otherwise, only *greater restoration*, *heal*, or *wish* can end the effect.

Using Evil Cleric Spells in Campaigns

Evil clerics create divine horror:

- **Plague Spreaders**: Using disease as a weapon
- **Dark Rituals**: Performing unholy ceremonies
- **Pain Dealers**: Specializing in inflicting suffering
- **Undead Masters**: Controlling and creating undead

Evil cleric spells work best when they corrupt the divine purpose of healing and protection, turning them into tools of suffering and destruction.

See also: Bard Spells, Oathbreaker Spells, Sorcerer/Wizard/Warlock Spells, Homebrew Additional Spells

---

Druid Spells

Evil druids pervert the natural world, using their connection to nature for destructive and corrupting purposes. Their spells focus on disease, mutation, and the perversion of natural cycles.

Designer's Note: Evil druids have a relatively short spell list in this book because many of their thematic spells already exist in 5e (*contagion*, *blight*, *insect plague*). The spells below are additions to the druid spell list. Full descriptions can be found in the Cleric Spells or Bard Spells sections where noted. See Appendix F for the complete consolidated spell list.

How to learn these spells: Druids prepare spells from the full druid list each day (*PHB* p. 66 — druids prepare a number of spells equal to Wis mod + druid level after each long rest, choosing from the entire druid spell list). Add these to the available druid spell list — they become available immediately. Pairs well with Circle of Vermin subclass. See Campaign Integration Guide for mid-campaign introduction.

Related homebrew: Homebrew ranger spells include *corruption of the wild* (3rd level), which is also available to druids.

Evil Druid Spell List

Cantrips

- *Preserve Organ* (see Cleric Spells)

1st Level

- *Extract Drug* (see Bard Spells)

3rd Level

- *Befoul* (see Cleric Spells)

4th Level

- *Pox* (see Cleric Spells)

6th Level

- *Insanity* (see Cleric Spells)

Using Evil Druid Spells in Campaigns

Evil druids create natural horror:

- **Corrupted Nature**: Twisting natural processes for evil ends
- **Plague Druids**: Using disease as a natural weapon
- **Toxic Environments**: Poisoning natural areas with *befoul*
- **Madness Plagues**: Spreading insanity through natural means

Evil druid spells work best when they corrupt the druid's role as protector of nature, turning natural cycles into weapons of destruction.

See also: Cleric Spells, Bard Spells, Homebrew Additional Spells

---

Sorcerer/Wizard/Warlock Spells

Arcane casters who turn to evil gain access to some of the most horrific and destructive spells imaginable. These spells focus on corruption, destruction, and the manipulation of life and death in unnatural ways.

Designer's Note: In 5e, the warlock class is a natural fit for many of these spells — particularly those involving fiendish pacts, soul manipulation, and dark bargains. We've included the warlock alongside sorcerer and wizard here. Spells shared with other class lists reference their full descriptions in those sections. See Appendix F for the complete consolidated spell list.

How to learn these spells:

- **Sorcerer/Warlock**: Spells Known — pick at level-up (*PHB* p. 100/107 — sorcerers and warlocks choose from their class list when they gain a level; they can also swap one known spell at each level-up). Add these to the available list.
- **Wizard**: Must find a scroll or spellbook and copy the spell (50 gp + 2 hrs per spell level, *PHB* p. 114 — the wizard's "Copying a Spell" rules). Great loot for villain lairs.
- See Campaign Integration Guide for mid-campaign introduction.

Related homebrew: Homebrew Additional Spells adds *hellfire eruption*, *fiendish transformation*, *blood reading*, *necrotic grasp*, *animate shadow*, and *soul cage (enhanced)*. Warlock Options adds expanded patron spell lists for Fiend and Undead patrons.

Evil Arcane Spell List

Cantrips

- *Slash Tongue* (see Cleric Spells)

1st Level

- *No Light* (see Bard Spells)
- *Sorrow* (see Bard Spells)
- *Spider Hand* (see Cleric Spells)

2nd Level

- *Darkbolt* (see Cleric Spells)
- *Dance of Ruin* (see Cleric Spells)
- *Wave of Grief* (see Bard Spells)

3rd Level

- *Aberrate*
- *Abyssal Might* (see Oathbreaker Spells)
- *Curse of the Putrid Husk* (see Bard Spells)
- *Demon Wings* (see Oathbreaker Spells)
- *Hell's Power* (see Oathbreaker Spells)
- *Sadism* (see Bard Spells)
- *Stunning Screech* (see Bard Spells)

4th Level

- *Pox* (see Cleric Spells)
- *Stop Heart*

5th Level

- *Morality Undone* (see Bard Spells)
- *Soul Shackles* (see Bard Spells)

6th Level

- *Insanity* (see Cleric Spells)

7th Level

- *Bestow Greater Curse*
- *Wave of Pain* (see Bard Spells)

Spell Descriptions

Aberrate

3rd-level transmutation (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: 60 feet
- **Components**: V, S, M (a bit of ochre jelly or gray ooze)
- **Duration**: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You cause horrific mutations in one creature you can see within range. The target must succeed on a **Constitution saving throw** or suffer one of the following effects (your choice):

- **Twisted Limbs.** The target's speed is halved, and it has disadvantage on Dexterity checks and Dexterity saving throws.
- **Bulging Eyes.** The target has disadvantage on attack rolls and Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.
- **Warped Hands.** The target can't hold objects properly; it drops anything it's holding and can't make weapon attacks or perform somatic components.

The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 5th level or higher, you can target one additional creature for every two slot levels above 3rd.

Stop Heart

4th-level necromancy (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: 60 feet
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: Concentration, up to 1 minute

- **Corruption Cost**: 1 level of exhaustion

You attempt to stop a creature's heart. The target must succeed on a **Constitution saving throw** or take 6d6 necrotic damage and be stunned until the end of its next turn. On a successful save, the target takes half damage and isn't stunned.

While you maintain concentration, you can use your action on subsequent turns to force the target to repeat the saving throw, taking 3d6 necrotic damage on a failure (no stun on subsequent saves). The spell ends if the target succeeds on two saving throws total.

Bestow Greater Curse

7th-level necromancy (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: Touch
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: Until dispelled

This spell functions as *bestow curse* cast at 9th level (permanent duration, no concentration), but you can choose from the greater curse alternatives listed in Chapter 2: Curses, in addition to the standard *bestow curse* effects. The curse can only be removed by *wish*, *greater restoration* cast at 9th level, or by fulfilling a specific condition set by the caster at the time of casting.

Special Categories

Corrupt Spells

Spells that draw power from the caster's own body or mind. They always have a **corruption cost** (see Evil Spells Overview). Corrupt spells can appear on any class list.

Demonic Spells

Spells that call upon or channel demonic power, often with chaotic effects. Thematically appropriate for Fiend warlocks and Abyssal sorcerers.

Infernal Spells

Spells that use hellfire or infernal energy, typically with lawful evil themes. Thematically appropriate for Fiend warlocks and Devil-pact characters.

Necromantic Evil

Spells that manipulate death and undeath in particularly horrific ways. Thematically appropriate for School of Necromancy wizards and Undead warlocks.

Using Evil Arcane Spells in Campaigns

Evil arcane casters create magical horror:

- **Corrupted Mages**: Wizards who've turned to forbidden knowledge
- **Fiend Warlocks**: Channeling infernal or abyssal power through dark pacts

- **Mad Scientists**: Using magic for horrific experiments
- **Soul Manipulators**: Stealing and trapping souls

Evil arcane spells work best when they represent the perversion of magical knowledge, turning the pursuit of understanding into tools of destruction and corruption.

See also: Bard Spells, Oathbreaker Spells, Cleric Spells, Homebrew Additional Spells

---

Evil Magic Items

This section contains magic items designed specifically for evil characters, including weapons, armor, rods, and wondrous items that spread corruption and destruction.

Designer's Note: All items below use standard 5e magic item formatting — rarity, attunement requirements, and properties. Weapon enhancements in 3.5e used a "+X equivalent" system that doesn't exist in 5e. Instead, these are presented as standalone magic items or as properties that can be added to existing magic weapons during crafting.

Weapon Enhancements

These properties can be applied to any magic weapon during creation. A weapon can have only one evil enhancement.

Fleshgrinding

Weapon (any melee), rare (requires attunement by a creature of evil alignment)

When you hit a creature with this weapon, the wound continues to tear and grind. The target takes an extra 1d4 necrotic damage at the start of each of its turns for 1 minute. The target can make a **DC 13 Constitution saving throw** at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success. The ongoing damage does not stack with itself.

Marrowcrushing

Weapon (any bludgeoning melee), uncommon (requires attunement)

When you score a critical hit with this weapon, the target must succeed on a **DC 15 Constitution saving throw** or have its hit point maximum reduced by 1d6 until it finishes a long rest. This is vile damage (see Chapter 2: Evil Effects).

Vile

Weapon (any), rare (requires attunement by a creature of evil alignment)

This weapon deals an extra 1d6 necrotic damage to good-aligned creatures. This necrotic damage is vile damage — it also reduces the target's hit point maximum by the same amount (see Chapter 2: Evil Effects). The weapon radiates a faint aura of evil detectable by *detect evil and good* and Divine Sense.

Armor Special Abilities

Soul-Devouring Armor

Armor (any medium or heavy), very rare (requires attunement by a creature of evil alignment)

When a creature dies within 10 feet of you while you wear this armor, you can use your reaction to absorb a fragment of its departing soul. You gain temporary hit points equal to the creature's CR (minimum 1) that last for 1 hour. Additionally, you gain advantage on your next saving throw made within 1 minute. **Curse**: Each time you absorb a soul fragment, there is a cumulative 5% chance that a fiend notices and attempts to claim your soul (DM's discretion).

Demon-Hide Armor

Armor (hide or leather), rare (requires attunement)

This armor is crafted from the skin of a slain demon. While wearing it, you have resistance to one of the following damage types (determined when the armor is created): fire, cold, lightning, or poison. **Curse**: After each long rest while attuned, roll a d20. On a 1, you gain one random cosmetic demonic feature (horns, red eyes, clawed nails, etc.) that is permanent until removed by *remove curse*.

Armor of Unholy Protection

Armor (any), rare (requires attunement by a creature of evil alignment)

You gain a +1 bonus to AC while wearing this armor. Good-aligned creatures that touch you or hit you with a melee attack while within 5 feet take 1d6 necrotic damage.

Rods and Staves

Rod of the Abyss

Rod, very rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster of evil alignment)

This twisted iron rod has 7 charges. While holding it, you can use an action to expend charges to cast one of the following spells (save DC 17): *summon lesser demons* (3 charges), *summon greater demon* (5 charges), or *darkness* (1 charge). The rod regains 1d4 + 1 charges daily at dusk. **Curse**: Each time you expend the last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, a demon of the DM's choice is summoned and is hostile to all creatures, including you.

Staff of Damnation

Staff, very rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This blackened staff has 10 charges. While holding it, you can use an action to expend charges to cast one of the following spells (save DC 17, spell attack +9): *inflict wounds* (1 charge), *vampiric touch* (3 charges), *blight* (4 charges), or *circle of death* (6 charges). The staff regains 1d6 + 2 charges daily at dusk. If you expend the last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the staff crumbles to dust.

Wand of Soul Theft

Wand, rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster of evil alignment)

This wand has 3 charges. When a creature dies within 60 feet of you, you can use your reaction to expend 1 charge and trap the creature's soul in a gem worth at least 100 gp that you are holding. The soul remains trapped until the gem is destroyed or *dispel evil and good* is cast on it. While a soul is trapped, the creature cannot be raised from the dead. The wand regains 1 charge daily at dusk.

Wondrous Items

Collar of the Damned

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

This iron collar is inscribed with infernal script naming a specific fiend. While wearing it, you gain resistance to fire damage and can speak and understand Infernal or Abyssal (depending on the fiend). **Curse**: You cannot remove the collar without *remove curse*. While wearing it, the named fiend can communicate with you telepathically at any distance and knows your location at all times.

Heart of the Victim

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This preserved humanoid heart beats slowly in your hand. While attuned, you can use an action to scry on the creature whose heart this was (as the *scrying* spell, no saving throw) if the creature is alive. If the creature is dead, you can instead cast *speak with dead* targeting its corpse (no corpse required — the heart serves as the focus). The heart has 3 charges, regaining 1 charge daily at dawn.

Chains of Damnation

Wondrous item, very rare

These adamantine chains can bind a creature of Large size or smaller. A creature bound by the chains is restrained and cannot teleport, plane shift, or use any form of magical transportation. The chains have AC 23, 50 hit points, and immunity to all damage except damage from a *holy avenger* or similar blessed weapon. The chains can be unlocked with a **DC 25 Dexterity check** using thieves' tools, or by speaking the command word (known only to the creature that locked them).

Cursed Items

Many evil magic items are cursed, binding their users to dark powers or corrupting them over time. These items often appear beneficial but carry terrible costs. Use the cursed item properties in the *DMG* (Chapter 7) as a starting point, adding evil-themed curses such as:

- Alignment gradually shifts toward evil
- The item whispers dark suggestions (Wisdom save DC 15 to resist acting on them)
- The item attracts fiendish attention
- The item demands sacrifices to maintain its power

Using Evil Magic Items in Campaigns

Evil magic items create tempting corruption:

- **Tempting Power**: Items that offer great power at terrible cost
- **Cursed Treasures**: Items that bind or corrupt their users
- **Dark Artifacts**: Legendary items of evil power
- **Moral Choices**: Players deciding whether to use evil items

Evil magic items work best when they're genuinely tempting but carry clear consequences, creating moral dilemmas and roleplaying opportunities.

Evil Artifacts

Artifacts are the most powerful magic items in existence, and evil artifacts are among the most dangerous. These items possess immense power but carry terrible costs, often corrupting or destroying those who dare to use them.

Designer's Note: 5e artifacts use the properties system from the *DMG* (Chapter 7): each artifact has minor and major beneficial properties, minor and major detrimental properties, and specific destruction conditions. The artifacts below follow that format. Roll on the *DMG* artifact properties tables for any properties marked as "random."

Major Evil Artifacts

The Book of Vile Darkness

Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement by a creature of evil alignment)

The ultimate tome of evil knowledge, containing spells, rituals, and secrets that can grant immense power but inevitably corrupt the reader. The book appears as a heavy tome bound in flesh, with pages of thin lead sheets.

Random Properties. The book has the following properties:

- 3 minor beneficial properties
- 1 major beneficial property
- 3 minor detrimental properties
- 2 major detrimental properties

Vile Lore. While attuned, you can reference the book to cast any evil spell from this chapter as if it were on your spell list. You must still expend spell slots and pay any corruption costs.

Dark Insight. You gain advantage on Intelligence (Arcana) and Intelligence (Religion) checks related to fiends, undead, and evil magic.

Corrupt Mastery. Your spell save DC increases by 2 when casting spells that deal necrotic damage or that have the (evil) tag.

Vile Apotheosis. If you remain attuned to the book for 100 consecutive days, you can perform a 24-hour ritual to gain one of the following permanent benefits (chosen once, cannot be changed): resistance to necrotic damage, the ability to cast *animate dead* at will (1 use per long rest without a spell slot), or a +2 increase to your Intelligence or Charisma score (max 24).

Corruption. Each day you are attuned, you must succeed on a **DC 15 Charisma saving throw** or your alignment shifts one step toward evil. Once fully evil, you must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw each week or become an NPC under the DM's control, consumed by the book's knowledge.

Destroying the Book. The Book of Vile Darkness can only be destroyed if a celestial of CR 20 or higher willingly sacrifices its existence to burn the book in radiant fire. The book reforms in 1d100 years unless the sacrifice is made on consecrated ground blessed by three different good-aligned deities.

The Crown of Horns

Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)

A crown forged from the horns of a balor, radiating palpable malice. It grants command over demonic forces but slowly transforms the wearer.

Random Properties. The crown has the following properties:

- 2 minor beneficial properties
- 1 major beneficial property
- 2 minor detrimental properties
- 1 major detrimental property

Demonic Command. While wearing the crown, fiends of CR 10 or lower must succeed on a **DC 18 Charisma saving throw** or be charmed by you for 1 hour. You can issue commands to charmed fiends (no action required). You can use this property on up to 3 fiends per day.

Abyssal Resilience. You gain resistance to fire and poison damage, and you are immune to the poisoned condition.

Demonic Transformation. For each month you remain attuned, you gain one permanent demonic feature: horns (1st month), red or black eyes (2nd), clawed fingers (3rd, unarmed strikes deal 1d6 slashing), leathery skin (4th, +1 AC), vestigial wings (5th), functional wings with 30 ft. fly speed (6th). After the 6th month, you must succeed on a **DC 20 Charisma saving throw** each month or become a demon permanently (DM's choice of type).

Destroying the Crown. The crown must be taken to the Abyss and destroyed by a good-aligned creature using a *holy avenger* while standing in a pool of celestial blood.

The Heart of Vecna

Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)

The preserved heart of the lich-god Vecna, still beating with undead power. To attune, the user must cut out their own heart and replace it with Vecna's (taking 10d10 necrotic damage that cannot be reduced).

Random Properties. The heart has the following properties:

- 2 minor beneficial properties
- 1 major beneficial property
- 2 minor detrimental properties
- 2 major detrimental properties

Undying. You no longer need to eat, drink, breathe, or sleep. You are immune to disease and the poisoned condition. You do not age.

Necromantic Mastery. Your spell save DC increases by 2 when casting necromancy spells. You can cast *finger of death* once per day without expending a spell slot.

Vecna's Whispers. Vecna can communicate with you telepathically at any time. He can cast *suggestion* on you (DC 22 Wisdom save) once per day.

Destroying the Heart. The heart can only be destroyed by *divine intervention* from a greater deity of good alignment, or by reuniting it with the *Eye of Vecna* and *Hand of Vecna* and then destroying all three simultaneously with a *wish* spell cast by a 20th-level cleric of a good deity.

Minor Evil Artifacts

The Demon Blade

Weapon (greatsword), artifact (requires attunement)

A sentient greatsword of black iron that feeds on souls. It has an Intelligence of 18, a Wisdom of 14, and a Charisma of 20. It communicates telepathically and has hearing and darkvision to 120 feet. Its alignment is chaotic evil.

Soul Eater. You gain a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls with this weapon. When you reduce a creature to 0 hit points with this weapon, the blade absorbs the creature's soul. For each soul absorbed, you gain 5 temporary hit points that last until your next long rest. The blade can hold up to 10 souls. Souls can be released by casting *dispel evil and good* on the blade.

Personality Conflict. The blade demands at least one soul per week. If it doesn't receive one, it attempts to dominate you (contested Charisma check, the blade has +5). If it wins, it compels you to attack the nearest living creature.

Destroying the Blade. The blade must be bathed in holy water blessed by a cleric of 17th level or higher, then shattered by a *holy avenger* wielded by a paladin who has never broken their oath.

The Devil's Contract

Wondrous item, artifact

A magical parchment of infernal origin that can bind souls to service. It requires no attunement — merely signing it creates the bond.

Soul Binding. A creature that willingly signs the contract is bound by its terms. The terms are set by the contract's current holder. Breaking the terms causes the signer's soul to be immediately transported to the Nine Hells upon death (no resurrection magic works). The contract is magically enforced — a creature that attempts to violate its terms takes 10d10 psychic damage.

Infernal Authority. The holder of the contract can present it to any devil of CR 15 or lower, who must acknowledge its authority (as if the holder had cast *command*, no save, limited to interactions regarding the contract's terms).

Destroying the Contract. The contract must be burned in hellfire (fire from the Nine Hells) while every creature whose soul is bound by it is present and willing to be freed.

Artifact Properties

Sentience

Many evil artifacts are sentient with powerful personalities, capable of dominating weak-willed users. Use the sentient item rules in the *DMG* (Chapter 7). Evil artifacts typically have Charisma scores of 18–22 and attempt to dominate their wielders through contested Charisma checks.

Corruption Effects

All evil artifacts corrupt their users. Common corruption effects include:

- Alignment shifts toward evil (Charisma save, DC varies)
- Physical transformation (demonic features, undead pallor)
- Mental domination (the artifact's personality overrides the user's)
- Dependency (the user cannot willingly part with the artifact)

Destruction Requirements

Artifacts can only be destroyed through specific, difficult methods that often require great sacrifice or power. Each artifact's destruction conditions are listed in its description.

Using Evil Artifacts in Campaigns

Evil artifacts drive epic stories:

- **Quest Objects**: Major campaign goals to obtain or destroy artifacts
- **Corruption Stories**: Characters dealing with artifact influence
- **World Threats**: Artifacts that could destroy or corrupt the world
- **Moral Tests**: Characters tempted by artifact power

Evil artifacts work best when they're central to the campaign story, creating epic conflicts and moral dilemmas that define the adventure.

Chapter 7: The Lower Planes

The Abyss

The Abyss is the realm of chaotic evil, an infinite expanse of layers each more horrific than the last. It is home to demons, the embodiment of chaos and destruction, and serves as the ultimate destination for chaotic evil souls.

Designer's Note: The Abyss is well-documented in 5e (*DMG* Chapter 2, *Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes*). This section supplements that material with additional detail from the Book of Vile Darkness. Use the *DMG* planar rules as the mechanical baseline.

Structure of the Abyss

Infinite Layers

The Abyss consists of an infinite number of layers, each with its own unique environment, dangers, and inhabitants. Some layers are infinite in size, while others are bounded but still vast.

Notable Layers

- **The Infinite Battlefield**: A realm of eternal conflict where demons wage war against each other
- **The Gaping Maw**: A layer of endless hunger and consumption
- **The Frozen Wastes**: Paradoxically cold layers where ice and frost dominate
- **The Burning Lands**: Layers of eternal fire and volcanic activity
- **The Sea of Slime**: A vast ocean of corrosive slime and filth

Demon Inhabitants

Demon Hierarchy

The Abyss has no true hierarchy, with strength being the only measure of authority. Demon lords rule their own layers but constantly war with each other.

Common Demons

- **Manes**: The weakest demons, often serving as fodder or slaves (*MM* p. 60)

- **Rutterkin**: Misshapen demons formed from chaotic energies (*MToF* p. 136)
- **Barlgura**: Ape-like demons that serve as scouts and skirmishers (*MM* p. 56)
- **Babau**: Assassin demons that hunt other demons (*VGtM* p. 136)
- **Chasme**: Fly-like demons that serve as aerial forces (*MM* p. 57)

Environmental Dangers

Chaotic Energies

The very fabric of the Abyss is infused with chaotic energy that can mutate, corrupt, or destroy visitors.

Native Dangers

- **Abyssal Corruption**: At the end of each long rest spent in the Abyss, a non-evil creature must succeed on a **DC 15 Charisma saving throw** or gain one level of madness (see *DMG* Chapter 8: Madness). After three failures, the creature's alignment shifts one step toward chaotic evil.
- **Demonic Portals**: Random portals that can deposit travelers anywhere. Roll on the Abyss Encounters table (*DMG* p. 63) when a portal is encountered.
- **Time Distortion**: Time flows erratically in the Abyss. For every day spent in the Abyss, 1d10 days may pass on the Material Plane.
- **Mental Corruption**: The Abyss slowly drives mortals insane. After 1d6 days, non-evil visitors must succeed on a **DC 12 Wisdom saving throw** each day or gain a short-term madness effect (*DMG* p. 259).

Resources and Treasures

Souls as Currency

Souls are the primary currency in the Abyss, traded, consumed, and used as power sources.

Abyssal Materials

- **Abyssal Iron**: Metal forged in demonic fires
- **Demon Blood**: Used in evil rituals and magic
- **Chaos-touched Gems**: Stones warped by chaotic energy

Using the Abyss in Campaigns

The Abyss serves as ultimate evil:

- **Epic Quests**: Journeying into the Abyss to stop demonic threats
- **Demon Hunting**: Tracking demons that have escaped to the Material Plane
- **Soul Rescue**: Attempting to save souls trapped in the Abyss
- **Demonic Pacts**: Characters making deals with demon lords

The Abyss works best as the ultimate source of chaotic evil, a place so horrific that even demons fear many of its depths.

The Nine Hells

The Nine Hells are the realm of lawful evil, a perfectly ordered hierarchy of suffering and damnation. Each layer is ruled by an archdevil who serves Asmodeus, the supreme ruler of all devils.

Designer's Note: The Nine Hells are detailed in the *DMG* (Chapter 2) and *Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes*. This section supplements that material. Devil stat blocks can be found in the *Monster Manual*.

The Nine Layers

1. Avernus

The first layer of Hell, a vast battlefield of endless war and conflict. It serves as the first stop for most souls condemned to Hell.

Ruler: Bel, War Duke of Avernus
Environment: Rocky wasteland, constant warfare, burning skies
Inhabitants: Lemures (*MM* p. 76), barbed devils (*MM* p. 70), mortal armies

2. Dis

The second layer, dominated by the Iron City of Dis, a massive fortress that serves as the administrative center of Hell.

Ruler: Dispater, Archduke of Dis
Environment: Iron city, bureaucratic nightmare, eternal paperwork
Inhabitants: Erinyes (*MM* p. 73), chain devils (*MM* p. 72), mortal bureaucrats

3. Minauros

The third layer, a vast swamp of filth and decay where souls sink into the muck for eternity.

Ruler: Mammon, Archduke of Minauros
Environment: Endless swamp, acidic rain, sinking foundations
Inhabitants: Bone devils (*MM* p. 71), mortal accountants

4. Phlegethos

The fourth layer, a realm of fire and industry where souls are forged into weapons and tools.

Ruler: Belial and Fierna, Archduke and Duchess of Phlegethos
Environment: Volcanic landscape, forges, eternal flames
Inhabitants: Horned devils (*MM* p. 74), mortal smiths

5. Stygia

The fifth layer, a frozen ocean of ice and cold where souls are preserved in eternal torment.

Ruler: Levistus, Archduke of Stygia
Environment: Frozen ocean, icebergs, absolute cold
Inhabitants: Ice devils (*MM* p. 75), mortal prisoners

6. Malbolge

The sixth layer, a realm of endless torture and suffering where souls are broken and remade.

Ruler: Moloch, Grand Vizier of Malbolge
Environment: Torture chambers, breaking wheels, endless pain
Inhabitants: Chain devils (*MM* p. 72), mortal torturers

7. Maladomini

The seventh layer, a realm of decay and ruin where once-great structures crumble into dust.

Ruler: Baalzebul, Archduke of Maladomini
Environment: Ruined cities, decaying architecture, endless filth
Inhabitants: Amnizu (*MToF* p. 164), mortal architects

8. Cania

The eighth layer, a realm of absolute cold where even the most resilient souls freeze solid.

Ruler: Mephistopheles, Archduke of Cania
Environment: Frozen wasteland, ice storms, absolute zero
Inhabitants: Pit fiends, mortal scholars

9. Nessus

The ninth and deepest layer, the realm of Asmodeus himself, where the most powerful devils dwell.

Ruler: Asmodeus, Supreme Archduke of Hell
Environment: Dark fortress, infinite bureaucracy, absolute order
Inhabitants: Pit fiends, unique devils, Asmodeus's court

Devil Hierarchy

Promotion System

Devils can advance through the hierarchy by proving their worth, often through the corruption of mortals or the defeat of rivals.

Types of Devils

- **Lemures** (CR 0): The weakest devils, formless masses of torment (*MM* p. 76)
- **Bearded Devils** (CR 3): Warrior devils with barbed weapons (*MM* p. 70)
- **Barbed Devils** (CR 5): Torturer devils with spiked bodies (*MM* p. 70)
- **Erinyes** (CR 12): Fallen angels who hunt down oathbreakers (*MM* p. 73)
- **Bone Devils** (CR 9): Devils who serve as police and enforcers (*MM* p. 71)
- **Horned Devils** (CR 11): Devils who lead armies (*MM* p. 74)
- **Ice Devils** (CR 14): Devils who serve as generals (*MM* p. 75)
- **Pit Fiends** (CR 20): The most powerful common devils (*MM* p. 77)

Using the Nine Hells in Campaigns

The Nine Hells represent organized evil:

- **Diabolic Plots**: Complex schemes involving infernal contracts
- **Devil Bargains**: Characters making deals with devils

- **Hellish Invasions**: Devils attempting to conquer Material Plane locations
- **Soul Trading**: The business of buying and selling souls

The Nine Hells work best as the ultimate expression of lawful evil, where every action has consequences and every debt must be paid.

Demon Lords

Demon lords are the most powerful demons in the Abyss, each ruling their own layer and commanding vast armies of lesser demons. They embody different aspects of chaotic evil and constantly war with each other for power and territory.

Designer's Note: Several demon lords have full 5e stat blocks in *Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes* (Demogorgon CR 26, Orcus CR 26, Juiblex CR 23, Yeenoghu CR 24, Baphomet CR 23, Fraz-Urb'luu CR 23, Graz'zt CR 24). This section provides lore and campaign guidance to supplement those stat blocks.

Major Demon Lords

Orcus, Prince of the Undead

Orcus is one of the most powerful demon lords, master of undeath and necromancy. He appears as a massive, bloated demon with a goat's head and bat wings.

Domain: Undeath, necromancy, death
Layer: Thanatos, the realm of endless death
Worshipers: Necromancers, liches, undead
Goals: To transform all life into undeath
Enemies: Demogorgon, all living things

Demogorgon, Prince of Demons

Demogorgon is said to be the Prince of Demons, a two-headed monstrosity that represents pure chaos and destruction.

Domain: Chaos, destruction, madness
Layer: The Gaping Maw, a realm of endless consumption
Worshipers: Madmen, destroyers, chaotic evil cults
Goals: To consume all existence
Enemies: Orcus, Graz'zt, all order

Graz'zt, The Dark Prince

Graz'zt is a charismatic and intelligent demon lord who rules through cunning and manipulation rather than brute force.

Domain: Temptation, corruption, seduction
Layer: Azzagrat, three connected layers of dark beauty
Worshipers: Corrupters, seducers, power-seekers
Goals: To corrupt all mortal life
Enemies: Orcus, Demogorgon, other demon lords

Juiblex, The Faceless Lord

Juiblex is a massive ooze-like demon who represents corruption and dissolution.

Domain: Oozes, slimes, corruption
Layer: The Slime Pits, a realm of endless filth
Worshipers: Cultists of decay, alchemists
Goals: To dissolve all matter into slime
Enemies: All structured beings

Yeenoghu, Demon Lord of Gnolls

Yeenoghu appears as a massive gnoll with flayed skin and a triple-headed flail. He is the patron of gnolls and all predatory beasts.

Domain: Predation, hunting, slaughter
Layer: The Hunting Grounds, a realm of eternal chase
Worshipers: Gnolls, predatory monsters, hunters
Goals: To hunt all life to extinction
Enemies: Civilization, all prey

Lesser Demon Lords

Baphomet, The Horned King

Baphomet rules over minotaurs and represents bestial rage and madness.

Kostchtchie, The Death Frost

Kostchtchie is a frost giant demon lord who embodies cold and death.

Fraz-Urb'luu, The Prince of Deception

Fraz-Urb'luu is a master of lies and illusion who delights in tricking mortals.

Demon Lord Abilities

Legendary Powers

Demon lords are CR 23–26 creatures with legendary actions, lair actions, and regional effects:

- **Innate Spellcasting**: Vast array of at-will and limited-use spells (see *MToF* stat blocks)
- **Immunities**: Immune to poison; resistant to cold, fire, lightning; immune to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
- **Magic Resistance**: Advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects
- **Summoning**: Can summon demons (typically 1/day, no concentration required)

Lair Actions and Regional Effects

Each demon lord has **lair actions** (initiative count 20) and **regional effects** that extend for miles around their lair. These are detailed in their stat blocks (*MToF*). Within their own layer, a demon lord can reshape the environment at

will and command all native creatures.

Mortal Influence

Demon lords can influence mortals through:

- **Cults**: Organizations of mortal worshipers
- **Corruption**: Tempting mortals to evil
- **Possession**: Taking over mortal bodies
- **Dreams**: Communicating through nightmares

Using Demon Lords in Campaigns

Demon lords drive epic conflicts:

- **Cult Plots**: Mortals working to bring their demon lord to power
- **Abyssal Invasions**: Demon lords attempting to conquer Material Plane
- **Soul Bargains**: Characters making deals with demon lords
- **Artifact Quests**: Seeking items to defeat or bind demon lords

Demon lords work best as ultimate villains, representing the pinnacle of chaotic evil and creating world-threatening scenarios.

Archdevils

Archdevils are the rulers of the Nine Hells, each commanding one layer and serving in Asmodeus's perfect hierarchy of evil. They represent the ultimate expression of lawful evil, combining absolute authority with infinite cruelty.

Designer's Note: Several archdevils have full 5e stat blocks in *Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes* (Zariel CR 26, Bel CR 25, Geryon CR 22, Hutijin CR 21, Moloch CR 21, Titivilus CR 16). Asmodeus is detailed as a deity in various 5e sources. This section provides lore and campaign guidance to supplement those stat blocks.

The Nine Archdevils

Asmodeus, Supreme Archduke

Asmodeus rules the ninth layer of Nessus and serves as the supreme ruler of all Nine Hells. He appears as a handsome nobleman or a terrifying serpent-creature.

Domain: All of Hell, ultimate authority
Layer: Nessus, the deepest layer
Worshipers: Tyrants, lawyers, contract-makers
Goals: To maintain perfect order through absolute control
Enemies: All chaos, demon lords

Bel, War Duke of Avernus

Bel commands the armies of Avernus and serves as the military commander of Hell's forces.

Domain: War, conquest, military strategy
Layer: Avernus, the first layer
Worshipers: Soldiers, mercenaries, conquerors
Goals: To conquer all realms in Hell's name
Enemies: Demon armies, rebellious devils

Dispater, Archduke of Dis

Dispater rules the Iron City of Dis and serves as the chief administrator and architect of Hell's bureaucracy.

Domain: Law, order, bureaucracy
Layer: Dis, the second layer
Worshipers: Bureaucrats, judges, lawyers
Goals: To create perfect order through endless rules
Enemies: All chaos, inefficiency

Mammon, Archduke of Minauros

Mammon rules the swamps of Minauros and embodies greed and avarice in their purest form.

Domain: Greed, wealth, corruption
Layer: Minauros, the third layer
Worshipers: Merchants, bankers, corrupt officials
Goals: To accumulate all wealth in existence
Enemies: Charity, generosity, sharing

Belial and Fierna, Archduke and Duchess of Phlegethos

Belial and his daughter Fierna rule the volcanic layer of Phlegethos, representing passion and corruption.

Domain: Passion, corruption, temptation
Layer: Phlegethos, the fourth layer
Worshipers: Tempters, corrupters, passionate evil
Goals: To corrupt all through desire
Enemies: Purity, self-control

Levistus, Archduke of Stygia

Levistus is trapped in ice but still rules the frozen layer of Stygia through sheer force of will.

Domain: Cold, betrayal, imprisonment
Layer: Stygia, the fifth layer
Worshipers: Betrayers, prisoners, cold-hearted killers
Goals: To imprison all who oppose him
Enemies: Freedom, trust, loyalty

Moloch, Grand Vizier of Malbolge

Moloch serves as Asmodeus's second-in-command and rules the sixth layer of eternal torture.

Domain: Torture, punishment, suffering
Layer: Malbolge, the sixth layer
Worshipers: Torturers, punishers, sadists

Goals: To perfect the art of suffering
Enemies: Mercy, compassion, healing

Baalzebul, Archduke of Maladomini

Baalzebul rules the decaying seventh layer and represents corruption and decay.

Domain: Decay, corruption, filth
Layer: Maladomini, the seventh layer
Worshipers: Corruptors, polluters, destroyers
Goals: To reduce all to filth and decay
Enemies: Purity, beauty, preservation

Mephistopheles, Archduke of Cania

Mephistopheles rules the frozen eighth layer and serves as Hell's chief scholar and tempter.

Domain: Knowledge, temptation, cold logic
Layer: Cania, the eighth layer
Worshipers: Scholars, tempters, cold-hearted intellectuals
Goals: To corrupt through knowledge and temptation
Enemies: Ignorance, faith, passion

Archdevil Abilities

Legendary Powers

Archdevils are CR 21–26+ creatures with legendary actions, lair actions, and regional effects:

- **Absolute Control**: Complete authority over their layer, including lair actions on initiative count 20
- **Infernal Law**: Protected by the binding laws of the Nine Hells; breaking a contract with an archdevil has severe magical consequences
- **Devil Command**: Can command any devil of lower rank (no action required)
- **Contract Enforcement**: Infernal contracts are magically binding; violations trigger automatic *geas*-like effects

Political Power

Archdevils engage in complex political maneuvering:

- **Hellish Politics**: Constant scheming against each other
- **Mortal Influence**: Corrupting mortal governments
- **Resource Control**: Managing Hell's resources and souls
- **Military Command**: Leading infernal armies

Using Archdevils in Campaigns

Archdevils create sophisticated evil:

- **Infernal Contracts**: Characters making deals with archdevils
- **Political Intrigue**: Complex schemes involving multiple archdevils
- **Hellish Bureaucracy**: Navigating infernal systems and laws
- **Corruption Plots**: Archdevils attempting to corrupt mortal institutions

Archdevils work best as intelligent, organized villains who create complex moral and ethical dilemmas rather than simple physical threats.

Other Lower Planes

Beyond the Abyss and the Nine Hells, other realms of evil exist in the multiverse, each with unique characteristics and inhabitants. These planes serve as homes to various evil fiends and represent different aspects of ultimate evil.

Designer's Note: The *DMG* (Chapter 2) provides an overview of all Outer Planes. This section expands on the evil-aligned planes with additional detail for campaigns focused on planar evil. Yugoloth stat blocks can be found in the *MM* (arcanaloth CR 12, mezzoloth CR 5, nycaloth CR 9, ultroloth CR 13).

Gehenna

Gehenna is a neutral evil plane of volcanic slopes and eternal fire, where souls climb endlessly upward or slide downward into damnation.

Structure

- **Four Layers**: Each layer is a volcanic slope with different characteristics
- **Eternal Climbing**: Souls constantly climb or slide based on their actions
- **Volcanic Environment**: Rivers of lava, ash clouds, burning rock

Inhabitants

- **Yugoloths**: The primary fiendish inhabitants of Gehenna (*MM* p. 311–314)
- **Neutral Evil Fiends**: Yugoloths serve as mercenaries in the Blood War between demons and devils
- **Damned Souls**: Those caught between law and chaos, often traded as currency

Hades

Hades is a neutral evil plane of gloom and despair, where all color and hope are drained from existence.

Structure

- **Three Layers**: Each layer is progressively more hopeless
- **Gray Waste**: A realm of absolute apathy and despair
- **Oinos**: The first layer of endless battlefields
- **Niflheim**: The second layer of cold and fog

Inhabitants

- **Night Hags** (CR 5): Evil crones who trade in souls and nightmares (*MM* p. 178)
- **Yugoloths**: Mercenary fiends who operate from Hades
- **Larvae**: The form of evil souls in Hades — wretched, worm-like creatures traded as currency among fiends

Carceri

Carceri is a neutral evil plane of prisons and inescapable damnation, where escape is impossible and hope is futile.

Structure

- **Six Spheres**: Each sphere is a prison with different themes
- **Inescapable Nature**: Magical and physical barriers prevent escape
- **Prison Realms**: Each sphere contains different types of prisoners

Inhabitants

- **Demodands**: Prison guards and torturers (use **chain devil** or **bone devil** stat blocks as proxies)
- **Trapped Titans**: Ancient beings imprisoned by the gods
- **Trapped Souls**: Those who cannot escape their damnation

Acheron

Acheron is a lawful neutral plane of eternal battle and rigid order, where armies clash in endless warfare.

Structure

- **Four Layers**: Each layer is a battlefield with different combatants
- **Cube Worlds**: Each layer consists of massive iron cubes
- **Eternal War**: Armies fight endlessly for territory and ideology

Inhabitants

- **Acheron Devils**: Lawful evil warriors
- **Modrons**: Lawful neutral beings of order
- **Warrior Spirits**: Eternal soldiers bound to battle

The Outlands

The Outlands is a true neutral plane that serves as the hub of the Outer Planes, containing gates to all other planes.

Structure

- **Spokes**: Nine spokes leading to different alignments
- **Gate Towns**: Towns that serve as portals to other planes
- **Neutral Ground**: A place where all alignments can meet

Evil Presence

- **Evil Gate Towns**: Towns leading to evil planes
- **Neutral Evil Areas**: Regions where evil influence is stronger
- **Planar Crossroads**: Meeting place for evil planar travelers

Using Other Lower Planes in Campaigns

These planes provide variety in evil:

- **Neutral Evil**: Complex villains who aren't simply chaotic or lawful
- **Planar Politics**: Conflicts between different evil planes
- **Unique Environments**: Adventures in unusual hellish landscapes
- **Specialized Villains**: Evil outsiders with specific roles and abilities

Other Lower Planes work best when they provide alternatives to the classic Abyss/Hell dichotomy, offering more nuanced forms of evil.

Planar Travel

Journeying to and from the Lower Planes is dangerous and difficult, requiring special knowledge, powerful magic, or supernatural assistance. The planes themselves resist intrusion, and many barriers exist to prevent casual travel.

Designer's Note: 5e provides planar travel rules in the *DMG* (Chapter 2) and spells like *plane shift* and *gate*. This section supplements those rules with specific guidance for traveling to evil planes, including dangers and mechanical effects.

Methods of Planar Travel

Magical Portals

Permanent or temporary gateways that connect the Material Plane to the Lower Planes.

Types:

- **Natural Portals**: Rare natural connections between planes
- **Created Portals**: Magical gateways created by powerful spells
- **Random Portals**: Unstable connections that appear unpredictably

Requirements:

- **Portal Keys**: Special items or conditions needed to activate portals
- **Knowledge**: Understanding of planar mechanics and portal locations
- **Power**: Sufficient magical energy to create or maintain portals

Summoning Spells

Spells that bring creatures from the Lower Planes to the Material Plane.

Common Spells:

- ***Summon lesser demons / summon greater demon*** (*XGtE*): Brings demons from the Abyss
- ***Infernal calling*** (*XGtE*): Summons a specific devil from the Nine Hells
- ***Gate*** (9th level): Creates a powerful portal for planar travel or summons a specific creature
- ***Plane shift*** (7th level): Transports creatures to another plane
- ***Planar ally*** (6th level): Calls upon a planar being for assistance

Risks:

- **Control Issues**: Summoned creatures may resist control
- **Revenge**: Summoned beings may seek revenge for their servitude

- **Corruption**: The act of summoning can corrupt the caster

Physical Travel

Rare methods of physically traveling between planes without magic.

Methods:

- **World Tree**: Cosmic trees that connect multiple planes
- **River Styx**: The mythical river that flows through multiple planes
- **Planar Paths**: Hidden pathways that exist between planes

Dangers:

- **Planar Storms**: Violent planar energy that can destroy travelers
- **Getting Lost**: The planes are vast and easy to get lost in
- **Native Inhabitants**: Planar natives may not welcome visitors

Barriers to Travel

Planar Barriers

Natural and magical barriers that prevent or restrict planar travel.

Types:

- **Planar Veils**: Natural barriers between planes
- **Divine Barriers**: Gods can block access to their realms
- **Magical Wards**: Powerful spells that prevent planar intrusion

Divine Intervention

Gods and powerful beings can prevent planar travel to protect their realms.

Methods:

- **Divine Edicts**: Gods can forbid travel to their domains
- **Planar Guards**: Powerful beings assigned to prevent intrusion
- **Natural Laws**: Some planes have inherent restrictions on travel

Travel Dangers

Physical Dangers

The Lower Planes are inherently dangerous to mortal visitors.

Hazards:

- **Planar Energy**: The raw energy of evil planes can harm mortals
- **Environmental Effects**: Fire, cold, acid, and other planar hazards
- **Native Creatures**: The inhabitants of evil planes are hostile to visitors

Mental Dangers

The mental toll of visiting the Lower Planes can be devastating.

Effects:

- **Madness**: After each long rest on a Lower Plane, a non-evil creature must succeed on a **Wisdom saving throw** (DC varies by plane: Abyss DC 15, Nine Hells DC 12, Hades DC 18) or gain a madness effect (*DMG* p. 258–260). Short-term madness for the first failure, long-term for the second, indefinite for the third.
- **Corruption**: After 7 consecutive days on a Lower Plane, a non-evil creature must succeed on a **DC 15 Charisma saving throw** or have its alignment shift one step toward the plane's alignment.
- **Despair (Hades only)**: At the end of each long rest on Hades, a creature must succeed on a **DC 15 Wisdom saving throw** or be unable to leave the plane willingly for 24 hours. After three failures, the creature loses all desire to leave permanently (only *greater restoration* or *wish* can restore the desire).

Spiritual Dangers

The soul can be damaged or trapped by planar travel.

Risks:

- **Soul Theft**: Night hags, yugoloths, and devils actively seek to claim mortal souls. A creature that dies on a Lower Plane has its soul trapped there — *revivify* and *raise dead* fail unless the caster is also on the same plane. *Resurrection* and *true resurrection* work normally.
- **Alignment Shift**: See Corruption under Mental Dangers above.
- **Planar Binding**: A creature that accepts a gift, signs a contract, or makes a bargain with a fiend on its home plane is bound by that agreement as if by the *geas* spell (no saving throw). Only *wish* can break such a binding.

Using Planar Travel in Campaigns

Planar travel creates epic adventures:

- **Rescue Missions**: Journeying to evil planes to rescue souls
- **Preventing Invasions**: Stopping planar incursions into the Material Plane
- **Seeking Knowledge**: Traveling to evil planes to learn forbidden secrets
- **Making Deals**: Journeying to bargain with planar powers

Planar travel works best when it's difficult and dangerous, making each journey a significant undertaking with real consequences.

Planar Traits

Each Lower Plane has unique traits that affect visitors and inhabitants. These traits determine how magic works, what dangers exist, and how the plane interacts with other planes.

Designer's Note: 5e's *DMG* (Chapter 2) provides optional planar effects but leaves much to the DM. This section provides concrete mechanical effects for each Lower Plane, designed to create meaningful tactical and survival challenges. All DCs and effects are calibrated for tier 3–4 play (levels 11–20), when planar travel typically occurs.

General Planar Traits

Alignment Traits

All Lower Planes have strong alignment traits that affect creatures and magic.

Effects:

- **Alignment Pressure**: At the end of each long rest, a creature whose alignment opposes the plane's must succeed on a **Charisma saving throw** (DC varies by plane) or have its alignment shift one step toward the plane's alignment. *Protection from evil and good* suppresses this effect.
- **Opposed Magic**: Spells cast by good-aligned creatures on a Lower Plane require a **DC 10 spellcasting ability check** or the spell fails (slot is still expended). This does not apply to spells that specifically target fiends or undead.
- **Native Advantage**: Fiends native to the plane have advantage on saving throws against spells cast by non-evil creatures.
- **Mental Pressure**: Visitors feel constant pressure to conform to the plane's alignment, manifesting as intrusive thoughts, emotional shifts, or hallucinations.

Magic Traits

The Lower Planes have unique magical properties that affect spellcasting.

Types:

- **Enhanced Magic**: Certain types of magic are enhanced
- **Impeded Magic**: Some spells are weakened or don't function
- **Wild Magic**: Magic may become unpredictable or dangerous
- **Dead Magic**: Some areas suppress magic entirely

Specific Plane Traits

The Abyss Traits

Alignment: Strongly chaotic evil
Alignment DC: 15
Magic: Spells with the (evil) tag or that deal necrotic damage have their save DC increased by 2. Spells that restore hit points restore only half the normal amount.
Environment: Chaotic energy causes mutations and madness
Time: Erratic — for every day spent, 1d10 days pass on the Material Plane
Gravity: Variable — the DM can change gravity direction at the start of any round (Dexterity saving throw DC 13 to avoid falling prone)

Special Effects:

- **Mutation**: At the end of each long rest, roll a d20. On a 1, the visitor gains a random mutation (use the *DMG* Lingering Injuries table, p. 272, or a cosmetic demonic feature). *Greater restoration* removes mutations.
- **Madness**: See Planar Travel — Mental Dangers.
- **Demonic Summoning**: Spells that summon fiends have their duration doubled in the Abyss.
- **Teleportation**: Teleportation spells (*misty step*, *dimension door*, *teleport*) require a **DC 15 spellcasting ability check** or the caster arrives 1d10 × 10 feet off target in a random direction.

The Nine Hells Traits

Alignment: Strongly lawful evil
Alignment DC: 12
Magic: Spells that deal fire damage deal an extra 1d6 fire damage. Spells that create chaotic effects (*confusion*, *chaos bolt*) have their save DC reduced by 2.
Environment: Orderly but oppressive atmosphere
Time: Consistent time flow — time passes normally relative to the Material Plane
Gravity: Normal gravity

Special Effects:

- **Contract Enforcement**: Any verbal or written agreement made on the Nine Hells is magically binding (as *geas*, no saving throw). Creatures are aware of this property if they succeed on a **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check**.
- **Infernal Surveillance**: Devils always know when a non-devil creature enters their layer. Attempts to hide from devils have disadvantage.
- **Orderly Structure**: Spells that create random or chaotic effects (*confusion*, *wild magic surges*) automatically fail.
- **Punishment**: A creature that breaks an infernal law takes 3d10 psychic damage at the start of each of its turns until it atones or leaves the layer.

Gehenna Traits

Alignment: Strongly neutral evil
Alignment DC: 13
Magic: Spells that deal necrotic damage deal an extra 1d6 necrotic damage. Healing spells restore only half the normal amount.
Environment: Volcanic slopes with eternal fire
Time: Normal time flow
Gravity: Steep — all terrain is considered difficult terrain. Creatures must succeed on a **DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check** at the start of each turn or slide 10 feet downslope.

Special Effects:

- **Climbing Difficulty**: Moving upslope costs 3 feet of movement per foot traveled.
- **Fire Damage**: Unprotected creatures take 1d6 fire damage at the end of each hour from ambient heat and volcanic vents.
- **Neutral Balance**: Neither lawful nor chaotic spells are enhanced or impeded.
- **Yugoloth Influence**: Yugoloths have advantage on all ability checks and saving throws while on Gehenna.

Hades Traits

Alignment: Strongly neutral evil
Alignment DC: 18
Magic: Spells that restore hit points or remove conditions have no effect unless the caster succeeds on a **DC 15 spellcasting ability check**. Necromancy spells have their save DC increased by 2.
Environment: Gray wasteland of despair
Time: Subjectively slow — short rests take 2 hours, long rests take 16 hours
Gravity: Normal gravity

Special Effects:

- **Despair**: At the end of each long rest, visitors must succeed on a **DC 15 Wisdom saving throw** or gain 1 level of exhaustion that cannot be removed while on Hades.
- **Color Drain**: Everything appears in shades of gray. Creatures have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

- **Emotion Suppression**: Bardic Inspiration, the *heroism* spell, and similar morale-boosting effects have no effect on Hades.
- **Apathy**: After 3 days, visitors must succeed on a **DC 18 Wisdom saving throw** or lose the desire to leave (see Planar Travel — Spiritual Dangers).

Carceri Traits

Alignment: Strongly neutral evil (chaotic tendencies)
Alignment DC: 14
Magic: Spells that allow planar travel (*plane shift*, *gate*, *teleport*) require a **DC 20 spellcasting ability check** or they fail. Divination spells that contact creatures on other planes automatically fail.
Environment: Prison-like atmosphere
Time: Normal time flow
Gravity: Normal gravity, but feels oppressive

Special Effects:

- **Imprisonment**: The plane actively prevents escape. *Plane shift* cast from within Carceri requires a tuning fork attuned to the destination plane AND a **DC 20 spellcasting ability check**. On a failure, the caster and all targets are deposited on a random layer of Carceri instead.
- **Hopelessness**: Visitors have disadvantage on Charisma saving throws while on Carceri.
- **Isolation**: *Sending*, *dream*, and similar communication spells fail when targeting creatures on other planes.
- **Confinement**: Creatures cannot willingly move more than 1 mile from the point where they entered the plane unless they succeed on a **DC 15 Wisdom saving throw** (one attempt per long rest).

Environmental Dangers

Physical Hazards

Each plane has unique physical dangers that can harm visitors.

Common Hazards:

- **Energy Damage**: Fire, cold, acid, or electrical damage
- **Atmospheric Effects**: Toxic air, pressure changes, lack of air
- **Terrain Dangers**: Unstable ground, cliffs, chasms
- **Native Creatures**: Hostile inhabitants that attack visitors

Mental Hazards

The mental effects of planar travel can be devastating.

Effects:

- **Alignment Pressure**: Constant pressure to conform to plane's alignment
- **Madness**: Extended exposure can cause insanity
- **Despair**: Some planes induce overwhelming hopelessness
- **Addiction**: Some visitors become addicted to planar energy

Using Planar Traits in Campaigns

Planar traits create unique challenges:

- **Environmental Puzzles**: Using planar traits to solve problems
- **Combat Challenges**: Fighting in unusual planar conditions
- **Survival Adventures**: Surviving hostile planar environments
- **Magic Limitations**: Adapting to restricted or enhanced magic

Planar traits work best when they create unique tactical and roleplaying challenges that force players to think creatively about their approach to problems.

Chapter 8: Evil Monsters

Demons

This section presents new demons and variants of existing demons, expanding the ranks of the Abyssal hordes with new horrors to challenge adventurers.

Designer's Note: Many demons from the 3.5e Book of Vile Darkness now have official 5e stat blocks in the *Monster Manual*, *Volo's Guide to Monsters*, and *Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes*. This section cross-references those stat blocks and provides guidance for demons that don't yet have 5e versions. The 3.5e "tanar'ri" subtype is simply "demon" in 5e.

Existing 5e Demon Stat Blocks

The following demons from this book have official 5e stat blocks:

Demon	CR	Source
Manes	1/8	*MM* p. 60
Rutterkin	5	*MToF* p. 136
Barlgura	5	*MM* p. 56
Babau	4	*VGtM* p. 136
Shadow Demon	4	*MM* p. 64
Chasme	6	*MM* p. 57

New Demon: Flesh Render

For demons not covered in official 5e sources, use the following template to create custom demons:

Flesh Render

Medium fiend (demon), chaotic evil

A hulking demon of raw muscle and exposed sinew, the flesh render exists to tear apart anything in its path.

- **Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)
- **Hit Points** 85 (10d8 + 40)
- **Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

- **Damage Resistances** cold, fire, lightning
- **Damage Immunities** poison
- **Condition Immunities** poisoned
- **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10
- **Languages** Abyssal, telepathy 60 ft.
- **Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

Magic Resistance. The flesh render has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Reckless. At the start of its turn, the flesh render can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls during that turn, but attack rolls against it have advantage until the start of its next turn.

Actions

Multiattack. The flesh render makes two claw attacks.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage.

Rend. If the flesh render hits the same creature with both claw attacks in the same turn, the target takes an additional 10 (3d6) slashing damage.

Demon Variants

Advanced Demons

To create more powerful versions of existing demons, increase their hit dice, proficiency bonus, and add one or more of the following:

- **Increased CR**: Add 2–4 CR worth of hit points and damage
- **Additional Innate Spellcasting**: Add 1–3 spells at will or 1/day
- **Legendary Actions**: Add 1–3 legendary actions for boss encounters
- **Lair Actions**: Add lair actions for demons encountered in their home layer

Unique Demons

Special demons with unique abilities. Use the demon stat blocks as a base and add unique traits. See Chapter 7: Demon Lords for the most powerful examples.

Demon Society

Hierarchy

While demons have no true hierarchy, strength and power determine authority. In 5e terms, a demon's CR roughly determines its place in the pecking order.

Roles

Different demon types serve specific functions in demonic society and warfare. Use the *MM* demon descriptions for role guidance.

Relationships

Demons constantly war with each other and form temporary alliances of convenience. The Blood War between demons and devils is a central conflict of the Lower Planes.

Using Demons in Campaigns

Demons create chaotic threats:

- **Demonic Invasions**: Waves of demons attacking from the Abyss
- **Cult Activities**: Mortals summoning demons with *summon lesser demons* or *summon greater demon*
- **Abyssal Quests**: Journeying into the Abyss to fight demons
- **Demonic Corruption**: Areas becoming infested with demonic influence (see Chapter 7: Planar Traits)

Demons work best when they're unpredictable and destructive, creating chaos and terror wherever they appear.

Devils

This section presents new devils and variants of existing infernal creatures, expanding the ranks of Hell's armies with new servants of lawful evil.

Designer's Note: The 3.5e "baatezu" subtype is simply "devil" in 5e. Many devils have official 5e stat blocks in the *MM* and *MToF*. This section provides new devils not covered in those sources, formatted as proper 5e stat blocks.

New Devil: Kocrachon (Torturer Devil)

Kocrachon

Medium fiend (devil), lawful evil

These devils serve as torturers and interrogators in Hell's prisons, specializing in extracting information through pain. They appear as gaunt, insectoid humanoids with surgical tools fused to their fingers.

- **Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)
- **Hit Points** 75 (10d8 + 30)
- **Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

- **Saving Throws** Int +7, Wis +5, Cha +6
- **Skills** Insight +5, Intimidation +9, Medicine +5, Perception +5
- **Damage Resistances** cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered
- **Damage Immunities** fire, poison
- **Condition Immunities** poisoned
- **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15
- **Languages** Infernal, telepathy 120 ft.
- **Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

Devil's Sight. Magical darkness doesn't impede the kocrachon's darkvision.

Magic Resistance. The kocrachon has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Torturer's Expertise. The kocrachon has advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks made against restrained or incapacitated creatures. It also has advantage on Wisdom (Medicine) checks made to stabilize or harm a creature.

Actions

Multiattack. The kocrachon makes two surgical blade attacks.

Surgical Blade. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) psychic damage.

Infernal Interrogation (Recharge 5–6). The kocrachon targets one restrained or incapacitated creature within 5 feet. The target must succeed on a **DC 14 Wisdom saving throw** or be compelled to answer one question truthfully and take 14 (4d6) psychic damage. On a success, the target takes half damage and is not compelled.

New Devil: Eye of Fear and Flame

Eye of Fear and Flame

Medium fiend (devil), lawful evil

Mysterious devils that serve as spies and assassins, appearing as skeletal figures with one eye of blazing fire and one eye of swirling darkness.

- **Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)
- **Hit Points** 136 (16d8 + 64)
- **Speed** 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)

- **Saving Throws** Dex +8, Con +8, Wis +7, Cha +9
- **Skills** Deception +9, Perception +7, Stealth +8
- **Damage Resistances** cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered
- **Damage Immunities** fire, poison
- **Condition Immunities** frightened, poisoned
- **Senses** truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 17
- **Languages** Infernal, Common, telepathy 120 ft.
- **Challenge** 10 (5,900 XP)

Devil's Sight. Magical darkness doesn't impede the eye's darkvision.

Magic Resistance. The eye has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Innate Spellcasting. The eye's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 17). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

- At will: *detect magic*, *fear*
- 3/day each: *scrying*, *suggestion*
- 1/day: *eyebite*

Actions

Multiattack. The eye uses Eye of Fear and Eye of Flame.

Eye of Fear. The eye targets one creature it can see within 60 feet. The target must succeed on a **DC 17 Wisdom saving throw** or be frightened for 1 minute. While frightened, the target is also paralyzed. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.

Eye of Flame. The eye targets one creature it can see within 60 feet. The target must make a **DC 17 Dexterity saving throw**, taking 22 (4d10) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

Devil Variants

To create more powerful or specialized devils, use the existing *MM* devil stat blocks as a base and apply one or more of the following modifications:

- **Increased Rank**: Add 2–4 CR worth of hit points, damage, and save DCs
- **Specialized Role**: Add proficiency in relevant skills (Deception for spies, Intimidation for enforcers)
- **Legendary Actions**: Add 1–3 legendary actions for unique or named devils
- **Infernal Contracts**: Give the devil the ability to create magically binding contracts (see Chapter 5: Diabolist)

Devil Abilities

Common Devil Traits (5e)

All devils share certain traits as defined in the *MM*:

- **Devil's Sight**: See normally in magical darkness
- **Magic Resistance**: Advantage on saves against spells
- **Damage Immunities**: Fire and poison
- **Telepathy**: Can communicate telepathically

Using Devils in Campaigns

Devils create organized threats:

- **Infernal Contracts**: Characters making deals with devils
- **Hellish Invasions**: Organized devil attacks on Material Plane
- **Political Intrigue**: Complex schemes involving devil politics
- **Soul Trading**: The business of buying and selling souls

Devils work best when they're intelligent, organized, and create complex moral and ethical dilemmas rather than simple physical threats.

Kythons

Kythons are alien creatures of flesh and horror, born from unknown realms and brought to the Material Plane through dark portals. They exist only to kill, consume, and reproduce, spreading their horror wherever they go.

Designer's Note: Kythons are unique to the Book of Vile Darkness and have no official 5e stat blocks. They fill a niche similar to the slaadi (chaotic aberrations) but with an insectoid/xenomorph horror theme. The stat blocks below are designed for a full kython hive encounter scaling from CR 1/2 to CR 15.

Kython Life Cycle

Broodling

Small aberration, neutral evil

- **Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)
- **Hit Points** 13 (3d6 + 3)
- **Speed** 30 ft., climb 30 ft.
- **Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	4 (-3)

- **Senses** blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 10
- **Languages** understands Kython but can't speak

Acidic Blood. A creature that hits the broodling with a melee attack while within 5 feet takes 3 (1d6) acid damage.

Pack Tactics. The broodling has advantage on attack rolls against a creature if at least one of the broodling's allies is within 5 feet of the creature.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage plus 2 (1d4) acid damage.

Adult Kython

Medium aberration, neutral evil

- **Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)
- **Hit Points** 75 (10d8 + 30)
- **Speed** 40 ft., climb 40 ft.
- **Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

- **Saving Throws** Dex +6, Con +6
- **Skills** Perception +4, Stealth +6
- **Damage Resistances** acid
- **Senses** blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 14
- **Languages** understands Kython but can't speak

Acidic Blood. A creature that hits the adult kython with a melee attack while within 5 feet takes 7 (2d6) acid damage.

Pack Tactics. The adult kython has advantage on attack rolls against a creature if at least one of its allies is within 5 feet of the creature.

Actions

Multiattack. The adult kython makes two claw attacks and one bite attack.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) acid damage.

Acid Spray (Recharge 5–6). The adult kython sprays acid in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in the area must make a **DC 14 Dexterity saving throw**, taking 21 (6d6) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

Slaughterking

Large aberration, neutral evil

The ultimate kythons — massive, intelligent apex predators that lead kython hives.

- **Armor Class** 19 (natural armor)
- **Hit Points** 207 (18d10 + 108)
- **Speed** 40 ft., climb 40 ft.
- **Challenge** 15 (13,000 XP)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	16 (+3)	22 (+6)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)

- **Saving Throws** Str +12, Con +11, Wis +8
- **Skills** Perception +8, Stealth +8
- **Damage Resistances** acid; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
- **Damage Immunities** acid
- **Senses** blindsight 120 ft., passive Perception 18
- **Languages** Kython, telepathy 120 ft.

Acidic Blood. A creature that hits the slaughterking with a melee attack while within 5 feet takes 10 (3d6) acid damage.

Hive Mind. The slaughterking can telepathically communicate with all kythons within 1 mile. Kythons within 120 feet of the slaughterking cannot be surprised and have advantage on initiative rolls.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the slaughterking fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. The slaughterking has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. The slaughterking makes three attacks: two claws and one bite. It can replace one claw attack with a tail spike.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (3d6 + 7) slashing damage.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (3d8 + 7) piercing damage plus 9 (2d8) acid damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it is grappled (escape DC 20).

Tail Spike. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, range 60/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (3d8 + 3) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) acid damage.

Legendary Actions

The slaughterking can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The slaughterking regains spent legendary actions at the

start of its turn.

- **Detect.** The slaughterking makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.
- **Claw Attack.** The slaughterking makes one claw attack.
- **Acid Burst (Costs 2 Actions).** The slaughterking sprays acid in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in the area must make a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw, taking 28 (8d6) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

Kython Abilities (Shared Traits)

- **Acidic Blood**: All kythons deal acid damage to melee attackers within 5 feet
- **Hive Mind**: Kythons within range of a slaughterking share telepathic coordination
- **Adaptation**: After encountering a damage type, kythons gain resistance to it after 24 hours (DM's discretion)
- **Rapid Reproduction**: A kython hive produces 1d6 broodlings per day if sufficient food is available

Using Kythons in Campaigns

Kythons create existential horror:

- **Invasion Scenarios**: Kythons invading and consuming regions
- **Survival Horror**: Characters trapped in kython-infested areas
- **Military Campaigns**: Organized battles against kython hives
- **Body Horror**: The horror of kython transformation and reproduction

Kythons work best when they're truly alien and incomprehensible, creating horror through their sheer otherness and relentless expansion.

Vile Undead

These undead creatures have been enhanced with evil power, making them far more dangerous than their common counterparts. They serve evil masters with greater intelligence and malevolence.

Designer's Note: In 5e, "vile undead" is a template that can be applied to any undead creature from the *MM*. The template adds vile damage (HP max reduction), enhanced intelligence, and command abilities. This replaces the 3.5e energy drain mechanic with the cleaner 5e HP maximum reduction system already used by specters and wraiths.

Vile Undead Template

Any undead creature can become a vile undead. Apply the following modifications to the base stat block:

Stat Modifications

- **Hit Points**: Increase by 50% (round up)
- **Intelligence**: Increase to at least 10 (if lower)
- **Wisdom**: Increase by 2
- **Charisma**: Increase by 4
- **Challenge Rating**: Increase by 2

New Traits

Vile Presence. The vile undead radiates an aura of evil detectable by *detect evil and good* and Divine Sense out to 60 feet.

Vile Strike. The vile undead's melee attacks deal an extra 1d6 necrotic damage. This necrotic damage is vile damage — it also reduces the target's hit point maximum by the same amount (see Chapter 2: Evil Effects). The reduction lasts until the creature finishes a long rest on consecrated ground or receives *greater restoration* or *heal*.

Undead Command. The vile undead can telepathically command any undead of lower CR within 120 feet (no action required). Commanded undead obey without question.

Magic Resistance. The vile undead has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Example Vile Undead

Vilewight

Medium undead, neutral evil

An enhanced wight with greater intelligence and vile power.

- **Armor Class** 14 (studded leather)
- **Hit Points** 67 (9d8 + 27) *(base wight: 45 hp)*
- **Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	19 (+4)

- **Saving Throws** Wis +5, Cha +7
- **Skills** Perception +5, Stealth +4, Intimidation +7
- **Damage Resistances** necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered
- **Damage Immunities** poison
- **Condition Immunities** exhaustion, poisoned
- **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
- **Languages** the languages it knew in life
- **Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP) *(base wight: CR 3)*

Magic Resistance. The vilewight has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the vilewight has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Undead Command. The vilewight can telepathically command undead of CR 3 or lower within 120 feet.

Actions

Multiattack. The vilewight makes two longsword attacks or two Life Drain attacks.

Life Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) necrotic damage plus 7 (2d6) vile necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by the vile damage dealt. The target dies if its hit point maximum is reduced to 0. A humanoid slain by this attack rises 24 hours later as a zombie under the vilewight's control.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage plus 3 (1d6) necrotic vile damage.

Types of Vile Undead

Apply the vile template to any of the following base undead:

Base Undead	Base CR	Vile CR	Key Enhancement
Zombie	1/4	2	Tactical intelligence, vile slam
Skeleton	1/4	2	Coordinated tactics, vile weapons
Ghoul	1	3	Enhanced paralysis DC (+2), vile bite
Specter	1	3	Enhanced Life Drain (vile damage), command
Wraith	5	7	Enhanced Life Drain (vile damage), create specters
Wight	3	5	See Vilewight stat block above

Creation Methods

- **Dark Rituals**: A spellcaster can create vile undead by casting *animate dead* or *create undead* while on desecrated ground and expending an additional spell slot of 3rd level or higher.
- **Evil Blessings**: A fiend or evil deity can transform existing undead into vile undead (DM's discretion).
- **Corruption**: Undead that remain on consecrated evil ground (such as a *hallow* spell with an evil effect) for 30 days automatically become vile undead.
- **Vile Apotheosis**: An undead that kills 100 or more creatures may spontaneously become vile (DM's discretion).

Using Vile Undead in Campaigns

Vile undead create intelligent threats:

- **Undead Armies**: Organized forces of intelligent undead
- **Necromantic Threats**: Powerful necromancers with enhanced servants
- **Ancient Evil**: Undead that have grown more powerful over time
- **Cult Leaders**: Undead who lead evil organizations

Vile undead work best when they're intelligent and organized, creating tactical challenges rather than simple mindless threats.

Corrupted Creatures

Good creatures that have been twisted and corrupted by evil, these monsters retain some of their former abilities but now serve dark purposes. They represent the ultimate perversion of nature and goodness.

Designer's Note: In 5e, "corrupted creature" is a template that can be applied to any beast, celestial, fey, or humanoid. This is similar to the half-dragon template in the *MM* (p. 180) — a set of modifications applied to an existing stat block. The corruption process provides both mechanical changes and roleplaying hooks.

Corrupted Creature Template

Any beast, celestial, fey, or humanoid can become corrupted. Apply the following modifications to the base stat block:

Stat Modifications

- **Alignment**: Shifts to evil (retains law/chaos axis)
- **Type**: Gains the "corrupted" tag (e.g., "celestial (corrupted)")
- **Hit Points**: Increase by 25%
- **Charisma**: Increase by 2
- **Challenge Rating**: Increase by 1

New Traits

Corrupted Aura. Good-aligned creatures within 10 feet of the corrupted creature have disadvantage on saving throws against being frightened.

Dark Resilience. The corrupted creature has resistance to necrotic damage and advantage on saving throws against being turned.

Corrupting Touch. The corrupted creature's natural weapons or unarmed strikes deal an extra 1d4 necrotic damage. A creature reduced to 0 hit points by this damage must succeed on a **DC 13 Charisma saving throw** or have its alignment shift one step toward evil when it is revived.

Appearance Changes

Corrupted creatures develop visible signs of their fall: darkened fur or feathers, red or black eyes, shadowy auras, twisted horns, or withered features.

Corruption Process

A creature can become corrupted through:

- **Evil Exposure**: Spending 30+ days in a Lower Plane or area under a *hallow* spell with an evil effect
- **Dark Magic**: Targeted by *bestow curse* or similar magic while at 0 hit points
- **Infernal Bargains**: Willingly accepting a fiend's gift of power
- **Forced Transformation**: A fiend of CR 10+ can spend 1 hour performing a ritual to corrupt a restrained creature (the creature can resist with a **DC 18 Charisma saving throw**)

Reversing Corruption

Corruption can be reversed by:

- *Greater restoration* cast at 7th level or higher
- *Wish*
- A 24-hour ritual performed on consecrated ground by a cleric of 15th level or higher
- The creature's own genuine repentance combined with an *atonement* ritual (DM's discretion)

Notable Corrupted Creatures

Corrupted Unicorn

Large celestial (corrupted), neutral evil

Once a symbol of purity, now a creature of dark corruption. Use the **unicorn** stat block (*MM* p. 294) with the following changes:

- **Alignment**: Neutral evil
- **Hit Points**: 84 (increased from 67)
- **Challenge**: 6 (increased from 5)
- **Healing Touch** becomes **Corrupting Touch**: Instead of healing, the unicorn's horn deals 2d8 + 2 necrotic damage (vile damage — reduces HP maximum).
- **Teleport** functions normally but leaves a trail of withered plants.
- **Innate Spellcasting** changes: Replace *calm emotions* with *crown of madness*, replace *dispel evil and good* with *bestow curse*.

Corrupted Treant

Huge plant (corrupted), neutral evil

Use the **treant** stat block (*MM* p. 289) with the following changes:

- **Alignment**: Neutral evil
- **Hit Points**: 175 (increased from 138)
- **Challenge**: 11 (increased from 9)
- **Animate Trees** becomes **Animate Blights**: The corrupted treant animates 1d4 **blights** (*MM* p. 31–32) instead of trees.
- **New Action — Poison Spores (Recharge 5–6)**: The treant releases spores in a 20-foot radius. Each creature in the area must succeed on a **DC 15 Constitution saving throw** or be poisoned for 1 minute and take 14 (4d6) poison damage.

Corrupted Dragon

Good-aligned dragons (gold, silver, bronze, brass, copper) that have fallen to evil. Use the appropriate metallic dragon stat block with the following changes:

- **Alignment**: Shifts to evil
- **Breath Weapon**: Deals necrotic damage instead of its normal type. This is vile damage (reduces HP maximum).
- **Change Shape**: The dragon's humanoid form appears gaunt, pale, and unsettling.
- **New Trait — Aura of Despair**: Creatures within 30 feet have disadvantage on Wisdom saving throws.

Using Corrupted Creatures in Campaigns

Corrupted creatures create moral dilemmas:

- **Fallen Heroes**: Former allies now serving evil
- **Corruption Plots**: Spreading corruption through the land
- **Redemption Quests**: Attempts to save corrupted creatures
- **Symbolic Evil**: Representations of ultimate corruption

Corrupted creatures work best when they represent the perversion of goodness, creating emotional impact and moral complexity.

Bone Creatures

Bone creatures are undead made entirely of animated bone, lacking flesh or other organic matter. They are created through dark necromantic rituals and serve as silent, terrifying servants of evil.

Designer's Note: In 5e, bone creatures are a template applied to any creature with a skeletal structure. They function similarly to the skeleton (*MM* p. 272) but retain more of the original creature's abilities. The **dracolich** (*MM* p. 83) is essentially a bone dragon and can serve as a reference for high-CR bone creatures. For simpler bone creatures, use the skeleton stat block as a base.

Bone Creature Template

Any beast, humanoid, or monstrosity with an internal skeleton can become a bone creature. Apply the following modifications to the base stat block:

Stat Modifications

- **Type**: Changes to undead
- **Alignment**: Changes to lawful evil (bound to creator's will)
- **Armor Class**: Equals 13 + Dexterity modifier (natural armor from hardened bone)
- **Strength**: Increase by 2
- **Dexterity**: Increase by 2
- **Intelligence**: Reduce to 6 (unless original was higher than 16, in which case reduce by 4)
- **Charisma**: Reduce to 5
- **Challenge Rating**: Same as base creature or +1 (whichever is higher)

New Traits

Silent Movement. The bone creature has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks. It makes no sound when moving.

Fear Aura. A creature that sees the bone creature for the first time must succeed on a **DC 12 Wisdom saving throw** or be frightened until the end of its next turn. Once a creature succeeds, it is immune to this bone creature's Fear Aura for 24 hours.

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the bone creature to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the bone creature drops to 1 hit point instead.

Standard Undead Traits.

- Damage Vulnerabilities: bludgeoning
- Damage Immunities: poison
- Condition Immunities: exhaustion, poisoned
- Senses: darkvision 60 ft.

Removed Traits

Remove any traits related to flesh, blood, breathing, eating, or sleeping. Remove any healing abilities.

Notable Bone Creatures

Bone Naga

Use the **bone naga** stat block (*MM* p. 233, CR 4). This is the canonical 5e example of a bone creature.

Bone Bugbear

Medium undead, lawful evil

Use the **bugbear** stat block (*MM* p. 33) with the bone creature template applied:

- **Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)
- **Hit Points** 32 (5d8 + 10)
- **Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

- **Skills** Stealth +7
- **Damage Vulnerabilities** bludgeoning
- **Damage Immunities** poison
- **Condition Immunities** exhaustion, poisoned
- **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
- **Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

Silent Movement. The bone bugbear has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

Surprise Attack. If the bone bugbear surprises a creature and hits it with an attack during the first round of combat, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) damage from the attack.

Undead Fortitude. See template above.

Actions

Bone Morningstar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Bone Dragon

For bone dragons, use the **dracolich** template (*MM* p. 83) applied to any dragon stat block. Key features:

- Retains the dragon's breath weapon (deals necrotic damage instead of original type)
- Gains Legendary Resistance, Magic Resistance, and frightful presence
- Immune to poison, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, charmed
- CR remains the same as the base dragon

Creation Methods

- **Animate Dead** (3rd level): Creates bone creatures from Small or Medium corpses (as skeletons)
- **Create Undead** (6th level): Creates bone creatures that retain more of the original creature's abilities
- **Dark Ritual** (DM's discretion): A 24-hour ritual requiring 500 gp of onyx per CR of the target creature, performed by a spellcaster of 9th level or higher

Using Bone Creatures in Campaigns

Bone creatures create horror and stealth:

- **Undead Armies**: Silent skeletal forces
- **Guardian Undead**: Silent, terrifying guardians
- **Stealth Threats**: Creatures that can approach without warning

- **Necromantic Creations**: Results of powerful necromancy

Bone creatures work best when they're used for stealth and psychological horror, creating fear through their silent, skeletal nature.

Unique Monsters

This section presents unique evil creatures that don't fit into other categories, each with distinct abilities and roles in evil campaigns.

Designer's Note: Unique monsters are one-of-a-kind creatures designed as boss encounters or campaign-defining threats. The Vaath below has a full 5e stat block. For other unique creatures, guidance is provided for building them using existing 5e stat blocks as a base.

Vaath

Large aberration, neutral evil

A massive, worm-like creature that burrows through earth and stone, leaving tunnels of corruption in its wake. Its body is covered in chitinous plates that ooze corrosive slime.

- **Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)
- **Hit Points** 152 (16d10 + 64)
- **Speed** 30 ft., burrow 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	6 (-2)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)

- **Saving Throws** Str +10, Con +8
- **Skills** Perception +6
- **Damage Resistances** acid; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
- **Damage Immunities** poison
- **Condition Immunities** poisoned, prone
- **Senses** blindsight 60 ft., tremorsense 120 ft., passive Perception 16
- **Languages** understands Deep Speech but can't speak
- **Challenge** 9 (5,000 XP)

Corrosive Trail. The vaath leaves a trail of corrosive slime wherever it moves. A creature that enters the trail or starts its turn there takes 7 (2d6) acid damage. The trail lasts for 1 minute.

Tunneler. The vaath can burrow through solid rock at half its burrow speed, leaving a 10-foot-diameter tunnel in its wake.

Earth Glide. The vaath can burrow through nonmagical, unworked earth and stone without disturbing it.

Actions

Multiattack. The vaath makes two attacks: one bite and one tail slam.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (3d8 + 6) piercing damage plus 9 (2d8) acid damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it is grappled (escape DC 18). Until the grapple ends, the target

is restrained and takes 9 (2d8) acid damage at the start of each of its turns.

Tail Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a **DC 18 Strength saving throw** or be knocked prone.

Acid Spit (Recharge 5–6). The vaath spits a glob of acid at a point within 60 feet. Each creature within 10 feet of that point must make a **DC 16 Dexterity saving throw**, taking 36 (8d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

Other Unique Evil Creatures

The following creatures can be built using existing 5e stat blocks as a base:

Creature	Base Stat Block	Key Modifications
Flesh Golem of Evil	Flesh golem (*MM* p. 169)	Add necrotic damage to slam, vile damage on critical hits
Shadow Beast	Shadow (*MM* p. 269)	Increase to CR 3, add multiattack, increase Strength Drain damage
Chaos Spawn	Gibbering mouther (*MM* p. 157)	Add random mutation each round, increase CR by 2
Hell Construct	Shield guardian (*MM* p. 271)	Fire immunity, Devil's Sight, infernal commands only
Soul Eater	Wraith (*MM* p. 302)	Life Drain also traps soul (prevents resurrection), CR 7
Dream Demon	Night hag (*MM* p. 178)	Enhanced Nightmare Haunting (deals vile damage), CR 7

Building Unique Monsters

When creating unique evil monsters for your campaign:

1. **Choose a base stat block** from the *MM* that matches the creature's general power level and combat style
2. **Add 1–3 unique traits** that define the creature's identity
3. **Add legendary actions** for boss encounters (typically 3 actions)
4. **Add lair actions** if the creature is encountered in its home territory
5. **Adjust CR** using the *DMG* monster creation guidelines (Chapter 9)

Suggested Unique Traits

- **Vile Aura**: Creatures within 30 ft. take vile damage at the start of their turns
- **Reality Warp**: As a legendary action, alter terrain within 60 ft.
- **Soul Consumption**: When the creature kills, it absorbs the soul (preventing resurrection)
- **Corruption Spread**: Creatures damaged by the monster must save or gain a corruption effect
- **Planar Anchor**: The creature cannot be banished while in its lair

Using Unique Monsters in Campaigns

Unique monsters create memorable encounters:

- **Boss Battles**: Climactic fights against unique threats
- **Plot Drivers**: Their abilities create story opportunities
- **Mystery Elements**: Discovering the nature of unique creatures
- **World Building**: Unique monsters make your world distinctive

Unique monsters work best when they're truly memorable and create lasting impressions on players, serving as highlights of your campaign.

Appendices

Appendix A: Quick Reference Tables

This appendix consolidates the most commonly referenced tables from throughout the book into a single location for easy DM access during play.

Vile Damage Quick Reference

Mechanic	Effect	Cure
Vile damage	Reduces hit point maximum by the necrotic damage dealt	*Greater restoration*, *heal*, or long rest in a *hallow* area
Vile strike (undead)	Extra 1d6 necrotic + HP max reduction	Same as above

Exhaustion Track

Level	Effect
1	Disadvantage on ability checks
2	Speed halved
3	Disadvantage on attack rolls and saving throws
4	Hit point maximum halved
5	Speed reduced to 0
6	Death

Disease Progression

Disease	Incubation	DC	Effects
Mindfire	1d4 days	13	Wisdom save or take 1d6 psychic damage
Soul Rot	1d6 days	15	Constitution save or lose 1 point from all ability scores
Demon Fever	1d12 hours	14	Constitution save or take 1d10 fire damage

---

Appendix B: Evil Encounter Tables

These tables provide ready-to-roll random encounters organized by environment and tier of play.

Tier 1: Levels 1–4

Evil Cult Encounters (Material Plane)

d12	Encounter	CR
1-3	1d4 cultists + 1 cult fanatic	2
4-5	1d6 cultists performing dark ritual	1
6-7	1 cultist with poisoned dagger	2
8-9	2 cultists trying to kidnap NPC	3
10-11	1 cult leader + 2d4 cultists	4
12	Cult summoning minor fiend	3

Undead Encounters

d8	Encounter	CR
1-3	2d4 zombies	1/2
4-5	1d4 skeletons	1/4
6-7	1 shadow	1/2
8	1 ghoul	1

Appendix C: DM Tools

Practical tools for running campaigns that use the Book of Vile Darkness.

Corruption Tracker

Use this tracker for each PC or important NPC exposed to evil influences.

Character	Corruption Points	Alignment Shift

Corruption Point Sources

- Using vile magic items: 1 point per use
- Making deals with fiends: 2 points
- Participating in evil rituals: 3 points
- Committing acts of extreme evil: 5 points

Madness Tracker

For planar travel or exposure to cosmic horror:

Character	Madness Level	Effects

Madness Levels

- **Level 1**: Disadvantage on Wisdom saves
- **Level 2**: Short-term madness (1d10 minutes)
- **Level 3**: Long-term madness (1d10 × 6 hours)
- **Level 4**: Indefinite madness

Appendix D: Evil NPC Gallery

Ready-to-use villain stat blocks at various challenge ratings.

Tier 1 Villains (CR 1–4)

Vessa Thornwick, Cult Priestess

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

AC 12 (leather armor)
HP 27 (5d8 + 5)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Wis +4, Cha +6
Skills Deception +6, Persuasion +6, Religion +3
Spell Save DC 14

Spells (3rd level, spell save DC 14):

- *Command* (2 slots)
- *Inflict Wounds* (2 slots)
- *Shield* (1 slot)

Appendix E: Magic Item Tables

All evil magic items from this book organized by rarity.

Uncommon Evil Magic Items

d6	Item	Type	Attunement
1	Candle of Dark Prayer	Wondrous	No
2	Corpse Salt	Wondrous	No
3	Marrowcrushing Weapon	Weapon	No
4	Cloak of Graves	Wondrous	No
5	Demon-Hide Armor	Armor	No
6	Ring of Dark Whispers	Ring	Yes

Rare Evil Magic Items

d8	Item	Type	Attunement
1	Vile Weapon (+1)	Weapon	Yes
2	Armor of the Damned (+1)	Armor	Yes

d8	Item	Type	Attunement
3	Rod of the Abyss	Rod	Yes
4	Crown of the Horn King	Wondrous	Yes
5	Soul-Devouring Armor	Armor	Yes
6	Staff of the Abyss	Staff	Yes
7	Amulet of the Damned	Wondrous	Yes
8	Ring of Soul Binding	Ring	Yes

Appendix F: Consolidated Evil Spell List

All evil spells from this book organized by class and level. Note: Many spells are shared between multiple classes - see Chapter 6 for complete spell descriptions.

Bard Spells

Level	Spell	School
Cantrip	*Slash Tongue*	Enchantment
1	*Cheat*	Enchantment
1	*Extract Drug*	Necromancy
1	*No Light*	Evocation
1	*Sorrow*	Enchantment
2	*Addiction*	Enchantment
2	*Song of Festering Death*	Necromancy
2	*Wave of Grief*	Enchantment
3	*Curse of the Putrid Husk*	Necromancy
3	*Sadism*	Enchantment
3	*Stunning Screech*	Evocation
5	*Morality Undone*	Enchantment
5	*Soul Shackles*	Necromancy
7	*Wave of Pain*	Evocation

Cleric Spells

Level	Spell	School
Cantrip	*No Light*	Evocation
Cantrip	*Preserve Organ*	Necromancy
Cantrip	*Slash Tongue*	Enchantment
1	*Angry Ache*	Necromancy
1	*Drug Resistance*	Abjuration
1	*Extract Drug*	Necromancy
1	*Heartache*	Necromancy
1	*Sacrificial Skill*	Transmutation
1	*Slow Consumption*	Necromancy

Level	Spell	School
1	*Sorrow*	Enchantment
1	*Spider Hand*	Transmutation
1	*Stupor*	Enchantment
1	*Suspend Disease*	Necromancy
1	*Tongue of Baalzebul*	Transmutation
2	*Addiction*	Enchantment
2	*Boneblast*	Necromancy
2	*Dance of Ruin*	Necromancy
2	*Darkbolt*	Evocation
2	*Sap Strength*	Necromancy
2	*Spider Legs*	Transmutation
2	*Spores of the Vrock*	Conjuration
3	*Befoul*	Transmutation
4	*Pox*	Necromancy
6	*Insanity*	Enchantment

Druid Spells

Level	Spell	School
Cantrip	*Preserve Organ*	Necromancy
1	*Extract Drug*	Necromancy
3	*Befoul*	Transmutation
4	*Pox*	Necromancy
6	*Insanity*	Enchantment

Sorcerer/Wizard/Warlock Spells

Level	Spell	School
1	*No Light*	Evocation
1	*Sorrow*	Enchantment
1	*Spider Hand*	Transmutation
2	*Darkbolt*	Evocation
2	*Dance of Ruin*	Necromancy
2	*Wave of Grief*	Enchantment
3	*Aberrate*	Transmutation
3	*Curse of the Putrid Husk*	Necromancy
3	*Sadism*	Enchantment
3	*Stunning Screech*	Evocation
4	*Pox*	Necromancy
4	*Stop Heart*	Necromancy
5	*Morality Undone*	Enchantment
5	*Soul Shackles*	Necromancy
6	*Insanity*	Enchantment

Level	Spell	School
7	*Bestow Greater Curse*	Necromancy
7	*Wave of Pain*	Evocation

Oathbreaker Paladin Spells

Level	Spell	School
2	*Boneblast*	Necromancy
3	*Abyssal Might*	Transmutation
3	*Demon Wings*	Transmutation
3	*Hell's Power*	Transmutation

Note on Spell Schools

Most evil spells fall into these categories:

- **Necromancy**: Spells dealing with death, undeath, and life force manipulation
- **Enchantment**: Spells that manipulate emotions and control minds
- **Evocation**: Spells that create harmful energy effects
- **Transmutation**: Spells that corrupt or transform natural processes
- **Conjuration**: Spells that create or summon harmful substances
- **Abjuration**: Protective spells twisted for evil purposes

See Chapter 6: Magic for complete spell descriptions, casting requirements, and mechanical details.

Appendix G: Glossary

Key terms from the Book of Vile Darkness.

Alignment: A creature's general moral and personal attitudes.

- **Lawful Evil**: Tyranny, oppression, organized evil
- **Neutral Evil**: Pure selfishness, amorality
- **Chaotic Evil**: Destruction, madness, unrestrained evil

Vile Damage: Damage that reduces hit point maximum until healed by consecrated magic.

Corruption: The process by which good creatures become evil through exposure to dark influences.

Fiend: A creature of the Lower Planes, including demons (chaotic evil) and devils (lawful evil).

Undead: Once-living creatures animated by dark magic.

Dark Pact: A bargain with a fiend or other evil entity for power.

Homebrew Supplement

⚠ **ALL CONTENT IN THIS SECTION IS HOMEBREW** — it is **not** from the original Book of Vile Darkness. It was designed to complement the converted material and ensure every class, race, and playstyle has evil-themed options.

How to Tell What's From the Book vs. Homebrew

Contents

01 — Subclasses

New subclasses for every class not already covered by the book's conversions:

Class	Subclass	Theme	Subclass At	Features At
Barbarian	Path of the Bloodrager	Pain, blood, self-harm for power	3	3/6/10/14
Monk	Way of the Hollow Soul	Life drain, ki vampirism, void	3	3/6/11/17
Ranger	Dread Stalker	Fear, curses, environmental corruption	3	3/7/11/15
Sorcerer	Fiend-Touched Bloodline	Inherited fiendish power	1	1/6/14/18
Wizard	School of Hemomancy	Blood magic, self-sacrifice	2	2/6/10/14
Artificer	Fleshsmith	Body horror, flesh grafts	3	3/5/9/15
Bard	College of Requiem	Death music, necromantic bardic inspiration	3	3/6/14
Rogue	Shade	Shadow merging, incorporeality, darkness	3	3/9/13/17

Already covered by the book (Ch. 5): Rogue (Cancer Mage), Warlock ×2 (Demonologist, Diabolist), Cleric ×2 (Archfiend, Divine Theft), Druid (Circle of Vermin), Fighter (Warrior of Darkness). Paladin uses the official Oathbreaker (DMG p. 97).

02 — Racial Options

- **Official evil-themed races** reference table (tiefling, drow, yuan-ti, dhampir, etc.)
- **3 new lineages**: Fiend-Scarred, Blighted, Soulbound
- **1 tiefling variant**: Abyssal Tiefling
- **6 racial feats**: Fiendish Constitution, Abyssal Adaptation, Infernal Negotiator, Blighted Resilience, Shadowfell Touched, Undead Kinship

03 — Backgrounds

- **Official backgrounds** with evil angles (reference table)
- **5 new backgrounds**: Cult Initiate, Grave Robber, Infernal Contractor, Escaped Thrall, Plague Doctor
- Full personality traits, ideals, bonds, and flaws tables for each

04 — Warlock Options

- **1 new pact boon**: Pact of the Flesh (Maw/Eye/Tendril symbiote)
- **11 new eldritch invocations** (fiendish, undead, and corruption themed)
- **Expanded patron spell lists** for The Fiend and The Undead patrons
- **4 warlock familiar variants** (abyssal larva, crawling claw, gazer, vargouille)

05 — Dark Gifts & Trinkets

- **20 dark gifts** (d20 table — DM-awarded supernatural boons with drawbacks), inspired by *VRGtR*)
- **50-entry evil trinket table** (d100)
- **5 common evil items** (Candle of Dark Prayer, Corpse Salt, Dread Mask, Inkwell of Binding, Whispering Skull)
- **7 uncommon evil items** (Amulet of Dark Warding, Blade of the Sacrificer, Cloak of Graves, etc.)
- **8 Dark Blessings** (minor supernatural rewards)

06 — Additional Spells

- **5 ranger spells** (1st–5th level): *predator's mark*, *blightfang*, *corruption of the wild*, *death's pursuit*, *soul snare*
- **3 sorcerer spells**: *chaos bolt (abyssal variant)*, *hellfire eruption*, *fiendish transformation*
- **4 wizard spells**: *blood reading*, *necrotic grasp*, *animate shadow*, *soul cage (enhanced)*
- **Blood Rite** non-spell ritual for barbarians
- Consolidated new spell list table

07 — Evil Organizations

- **4 villain factions**: Ashen Covenant (necromancers), Crimson Ledger (assassins/blackmailers), Fleshweavers' Circle (bio-alchemists), Obsidian Conclave (fiend-worshippers)
- Each with full hierarchy, goals, membership benefits, initiation, and adventure hooks
- Quick NPC generator table for organization members

Class Coverage Summary

Every class now has at least one evil-themed option:

Class	From the Book (Ch. 5)	Homebrew	Spells
Barbarian	—	Path of the Bloodrager	Blood Rite (ritual)
Bard	—	College of Requiem	14 spells (Ch. 6)
Cleric	Archfiend Domain, Divine Theft Domain	—	24 spells (Ch. 6)
Druid	Circle of Vermin	—	5 spells (Ch. 6) + *corruption of the wild*
Fighter	Warrior of Darkness	—	—
Monk	—	Way of the Hollow Soul	—
Paladin	Oathbreaker (*DMG* p. 97)	—	12 spells (Ch. 6)
Ranger	—	Dread Stalker	5 new spells
Rogue	Cancer Mage	Shade	—
Sorcerer	—	Fiend-Touched Bloodline	3 new spells
Warlock	Demonologist, Diabolist	Pact of Flesh, 11 invocations	Expanded patron lists
Wizard	—	School of Hemomancy	4 new spells
Artificer	—	Fleshsmith	Subclass spell list

See CAMPAIGN-INTEGRATION-GUIDE for level requirements, multiclass prerequisites, and tier-by-tier integration guidance.

Homebrew Subclasses

⚠ **HOMEBREW**: This content is **not** from the original Book of Vile Darkness. These subclasses were designed to complement the converted material, ensuring every class has at least one evil-themed option. They draw inspiration from 5e supplements like *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*, *Tasha's Cauldron of Everything*, and *Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft*.

How to Use in Your Campaign

New campaign: Choose your subclass at character creation at the level indicated in the table below. No special requirements beyond DM approval.

Existing campaign: A PC can adopt one of these subclasses at the appropriate level-up with a story trigger — a dark vision, a fiendish encounter, a traumatic event, or discovering forbidden knowledge. Use the optional retraining rules from *TCoE* (p. 10 — "at any level where you gain a class feature, you can swap your subclass for another in the same class, with DM approval and a narrative justification") if swapping an existing subclass.

Multiclassing: Meet the ability score prerequisites (*PHB* p. 163 — you need a minimum of 13 in the new class's primary ability score, *and* 13 in your current class's primary score), then take enough levels in the new class to reach its subclass level. See CAMPAIGN-INTEGRATION-GUIDE for the full multiclass table.

As NPCs: All of these work great for villains. See appendix-d-npc-gallery for examples.

Existing Evil Subclass Options (From the Book)

The following subclasses were converted from the original Book of Vile Darkness — see Chapter 5:

Class	Subclass	Subclass At	Theme
Rogue	Cancer Mage	3	Disease, vermin, plague
Warlock	The Demon Prince	1	Demonic summoning, chaos
Warlock	The Infernal Contract	1	Devil pacts, contracts
Cleric	Archfiend Domain	1	Service to specific archfiends
Cleric	Divine Theft Domain	1	Stealing divine power
Druid	Circle of Vermin	2	Insect swarms, corruption
Fighter	Warrior of Darkness	3	Dark martial power
Paladin	Oathbreaker (*DMG* p. 97)	3	Fallen paladin (official 5e)

New Homebrew Subclasses

Class	Subclass	Subclass At	Features At	Multiclass Prereq
Barbarian	Path of the Bloodrager	3	3/6/10/14	Str 13
Monk	Way of the Hollow Soul	3	3/6/11/17	Dex 13 + Wis 13
Ranger	Dread Stalker	3	3/7/11/15	Dex 13 + Wis 13
Sorcerer	Fiend-Touched Bloodline	1	1/6/14/18	Cha 13
Wizard	School of Hemomancy	2	2/6/10/14	Int 13
Artificer	Fleshsmith	3	3/5/9/15	Int 13
Bard	College of Requiem	3	3/6/14	Cha 13

Class	Subclass	Subclass At	Features At	Multiclass Prereq
Rogue	Shade	3	3/9/13/17	Dex 13

Barbarian: Path of the Bloodrager

Some barbarians don't just channel fury — they channel suffering. Bloodragers draw power from pain, both their own and others'. Their rage is not mere anger but a supernatural connection to the primal violence that underlies all existence. Many serve demon lords or dark gods of slaughter.

Integrating into an existing character: Your barbarian doesn't need to have been evil from the start. This path works for a barbarian who suffers a traumatic event mid-campaign — a near-death experience, a curse, or exposure to vile damage. At your next level-up to 3 (or via *TCoE* retraining — swap your subclass at any level-up with DM approval), the rage shifts from anger to something darker. The self-harm aspect can be roleplayed as an addiction to pain, a blood ritual taught by a dark mentor, or an involuntary response to rage. Talk to your DM about what triggered the change.

Bloodletting Frenzy

3rd-level Path of the Bloodrager feature

When you enter a rage, you can cut yourself as part of the bonus action, taking 1d6 slashing damage that can't be reduced or prevented. For the duration of the rage, your melee weapon attacks deal an extra 1d4 necrotic damage.

At 10th level, this extra damage increases to 1d6.

Clarification: The extra necrotic damage from Bloodletting Frenzy stacks with the bonus damage from your Rage feature and any magical weapon properties. It is added to each melee weapon attack you make while raging.

Taste of Agony

3rd-level Path of the Bloodrager feature

While raging, when you reduce a hostile creature to 0 hit points, you gain temporary hit points equal to your Constitution modifier + your barbarian level (minimum 1).

Crimson Resilience

6th-level Path of the Bloodrager feature

While raging, you have resistance to necrotic damage in addition to your other rage resistances. Additionally, when you take damage from a hostile creature, you can use your reaction to make one melee weapon attack against that creature if it is within your reach. You can use this reaction a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, regaining all uses after a long rest.

Bloodscent

10th-level Path of the Bloodrager feature

You can smell blood within 60 feet of you. You have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) and Wisdom (Survival) checks to track or locate wounded creatures (those below their hit point maximum). Additionally, your melee weapon attacks score a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20 against creatures below half their hit point maximum.

Hemorrhagic Fury

14th-level Path of the Bloodrager feature

While raging, when you hit a creature with a melee weapon attack, the wound continues to bleed. The target takes 1d4 necrotic damage at the start of each of its turns for 1 minute. This damage stacks with itself up to 3 times (3d4 maximum). A creature can use its action to make a Wisdom (Medicine) check (DC 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier), ending the bleeding on a success. *Heal*, *regenerate*, or any magical healing also ends the bleeding.

Clarification: Each hit applies a separate bleed effect. If you hit the same creature twice in one turn, it gains two stacks of bleeding (2d4 at the start of its turn). The maximum of 3d4 applies per creature, not per attack.

Monk: Way of the Hollow Soul

Monks who follow the Way of the Hollow Soul have emptied themselves of compassion, empathy, and mercy. They channel ki not through inner peace but through inner void — a perfect emptiness that devours the life force of others. Some were trained by fiends; others discovered this path through trauma or despair.

Integrating into an existing character: A monk who has experienced profound loss, betrayal, or despair can find this path. The "hollow" isn't something you seek — it's something that happens to you. Perhaps your monastery was destroyed, your master was killed, or you witnessed something that broke your faith in the balance of the universe. At level 3, your ki shifts from warm inner light to cold inner void. Mechanically, nothing changes about your existing monk features — the flavor just darkens. Your Flurry of Blows now feels like draining strikes rather than disciplined attacks.

Draining Touch

3rd-level Way of the Hollow Soul feature

When you hit a creature with an unarmed strike, you can spend 1 ki point to drain its vitality. The target takes an extra 1d6 necrotic damage, and you regain hit points equal to the necrotic damage dealt.

At 11th level, this extra damage increases to 2d6.

Empty Mind, Empty Heart

3rd-level Way of the Hollow Soul feature

You gain proficiency in Deception and Insight. Your emotional void makes you difficult to read — you have advantage on saving throws against being charmed and against spells or effects that detect your thoughts or emotions (such as *detect thoughts* or *zone of truth*).

Soul Siphon

6th-level Way of the Hollow Soul feature

When you use Stunning Strike and the target fails its saving throw, you can choose to forgo the stun and instead drain the target's life force. Choose one of the following benefits (the target is **not** stunned):

- **Drain**: You regain hit points equal to your Martial Arts die + your Wisdom modifier.
- **Devour**: You regain 1 spent ki point.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum 1), regaining all uses after a long rest.

Design Note: The original version granted ki recovery *on top of* the stun, creating a feedback loop that rewarded already-optimal play. The revised version forces a tactical choice: stun the target (control) OR drain it (sustain/resources). This follows the AND→OR principle — the feature is still appealing, but now requires a meaningful decision each time.

Void Step

11th-level Way of the Hollow Soul feature

You can spend 3 ki points to cast *dimension door* without material components. When you arrive, each creature within 5 feet of your destination must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against your ki save DC or take 3d6 necrotic damage as you pull life energy from the area.

Annihilating Palm

17th-level Way of the Hollow Soul feature

You can spend 4 ki points when you hit a creature with an unarmed strike to attempt to destroy its life force. The target must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against your ki save DC or take 10d6 necrotic damage. If this damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, its soul is consumed — it can't be raised from the dead by any means short of *wish* or *true resurrection*. On a successful save, the target takes half damage and its soul is unaffected.

You can use this feature once, regaining the ability to do so after a long rest.

Ranger: Dread Stalker

Dread Stalkers are rangers who have turned their survival skills toward predation. Where other rangers protect the wilds, Dread Stalkers corrupt them. They forge bonds with dark powers — fiends, undead patrons, or the Shadowfell itself — gaining the ability to curse their prey and feed on fear. They are bounty hunters, assassins, and terror-bringers who leave blighted trails wherever they walk.

Designer's Note: This replaces the earlier "Fell Hunter" draft, which was too similar to the Gloom Stalker (*XGtE* p. 41). The Dread Stalker focuses on **fear, curses, and environmental corruption** rather than darkness and ambush, giving it a distinct mechanical identity. If you want a dark-themed ranger without homebrew, the Gloom Stalker already works well for evil characters.

Integrating into an existing character: A ranger who witnesses something deeply corrupting — a blighted forest, a fiend's lair, a mass grave — might find their connection to nature twisting. At level 3, your bond with the natural world sours. Animals shy away from you, plants wilt at your prolonged touch, and your tracking instincts become predatory rather than protective. This works especially well for a ranger who failed to protect something they cared about, or who made a deal with a dark power to save someone. Pair with the Escaped Thrall or Cult Initiate background for extra flavor.

Dread Stalker Magic

3rd-level Dread Stalker feature

You learn additional spells at certain ranger levels:

Ranger Level	Spell
3rd	*cause fear* (*XGtE* p. 151)
5th	*shadow blade* (*XGtE* p. 164)

Ranger Level	Spell
9th	*fear*
13th	*blight*
17th	*contagion*

Prey's Dread

3rd-level Dread Stalker feature

As a bonus action, you can curse one creature you can see within 90 feet. For 1 hour, the cursed creature has the following effects:

- The first time you hit the cursed creature with a weapon attack on each of your turns, it takes an extra 1d4 psychic damage.
- The cursed creature has disadvantage on saving throws against being frightened.
- You know the cursed creature's emotional state (calm, afraid, angry, etc.) and general direction while it is within 1 mile.

The curse ends early if you curse a different creature, if the target dies, or if you and the target are on different planes. You can use this feature a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, regaining all uses after a long rest.

Unsettling Presence

3rd-level Dread Stalker feature

You gain proficiency in Intimidation. Beasts with a CR of 1 or lower are frightened of you and won't willingly approach within 30 feet of you. Plants within 5 feet of you wilt visibly over the course of a minute (cosmetic only, but useful for tracking you).

Aura of Dread

7th-level Dread Stalker feature

You emanate an aura of unease. When a creature that is cursed by your Prey's Dread starts its turn within 30 feet of you, it must succeed on a **Wisdom saving throw** against your spell save DC or be frightened of you until the start of its next turn. A creature that succeeds on this save is immune to your Aura of Dread for 24 hours.

Additionally, you are immune to the frightened condition.

Blighted Trail

11th-level Dread Stalker feature

Your Prey's Dread extra damage increases to 1d6 psychic damage. Additionally, when you move, you can choose to leave a **blighted trail** behind you. The trail lasts for 1 minute and has the following effects:

- The trail is difficult terrain for creatures other than you.
- A creature that starts its turn on the trail takes 1d6 necrotic damage.
- The trail is visible as a faint darkening of the ground (dim light or darkness makes it harder to spot — DC 15 Perception).

You can create a blighted trail a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, regaining all uses after a long rest. Each use lasts for 1 minute.

Death Curse

15th-level Dread Stalker feature

When you reduce a creature cursed by your Prey's Dread to 0 hit points, you can intensify the curse as it dies. Choose one:

- **Spreading Dread**: Each creature of your choice within 30 feet of the fallen creature must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw against your spell save DC or be frightened of you for 1 minute. A frightened creature can repeat the save at the end of each of its turns.
- **Lingering Curse**: The fallen creature can't be raised from the dead for 1d4 days. During this time, you can cast *speak with dead* targeting the creature without material components.
- **Stolen Vitality**: You regain hit points equal to 2d10 + your Wisdom modifier and gain advantage on attack rolls until the end of your next turn.

You can use this feature once, regaining the ability to do so after a long rest.

Sorcerer: Fiend-Touched Bloodline

Your innate magic comes from fiendish power that was infused into your bloodline. Perhaps an ancestor made a deal with a devil, or a demon's corruption seeped into your family line. Unlike a warlock, you didn't choose this power — it chose you, and it hungers to be used.

Designer's Note: This fills the gap between the Warlock's Fiend patron (a conscious pact) and the Sorcerer's existing bloodlines. It represents inherited evil power rather than bargained power.

Integrating into an existing character: Sorcerers choose their origin at level 1, so this is best for new characters or replacement PCs. However, a DM can allow a sorcerer to "awaken" a dormant fiendish bloodline mid-campaign using *TCoE* retraining (swap your subclass at any level-up with DM approval) — perhaps triggered by exposure to an evil artifact, a near-death experience in the Abyss, or a family secret revealed. The key is that this power was always in your blood; it just needed a catalyst. Your existing sorcerer spells don't change, but your fire spells might start flickering with an unnatural color, and your eyes might glow faintly when you cast.

Fiendish Origin

1st-level Fiend-Touched feature

You can speak, read, and write Infernal or Abyssal (your choice). Additionally, whenever you cast a spell that deals fire or necrotic damage, you can change the damage type to the other (fire ↔ necrotic).

You also learn the *hellish rebuke* spell, which doesn't count against your number of sorcerer spells known.

Dark Appetite

1st-level Fiend-Touched feature

When you reduce a hostile creature to 0 hit points with a sorcerer spell, you gain temporary hit points equal to your Charisma modifier + your sorcerer level (minimum 1). Additionally, when you cast *hellish rebuke*, you can expend 1 sorcery point to cast it at one level higher than the spell slot expended.

Design Note: Draconic Bloodline's Elemental Affinity (add CHA mod to damage) is a 6th-level feature. Granting the full CHA mod rider at 1st level violated Commandment VIII (Gate Power by Level). Dark Appetite provides kill-

triggered temp HP (bounded, requires action investment) and an enhanced *hellish rebuke* to establish the subclass identity without front-loading damage.

Hellfire Surge

6th-level Fiend-Touched feature

When you cast a sorcerer spell of 1st level or higher that deals fire or necrotic damage, you can add your Charisma modifier to one damage roll of that spell against one target. If the target is a celestial, you deal an extra 1d6 damage.

Additionally, when you finish a long rest, you can choose one damage type from the following list: fire, cold, lightning, poison, or necrotic. You gain resistance to that damage type until you choose a different one with this feature.

Infernal Wrath

14th-level Fiend-Touched feature

When you are reduced to half your hit point maximum or lower, hellfire erupts from your body. Each creature of your choice within 10 feet must make a Dexterity saving throw against your sorcerer spell save DC, taking 4d10 fire damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. You can use this feature once, regaining the ability to do so after a short or long rest.

Additionally, you sprout fiendish wings (bat-like or feathered, your choice) and gain a flying speed of 30 feet. The wings last for 1 minute or until you dismiss them (no action required).

Dark Apotheosis

18th-level Fiend-Touched feature

You can spend 6 sorcery points as a bonus action to assume a fiendish form for 1 minute. While transformed:

- You gain immunity to fire and poison damage.
- You have truesight out to 60 feet.
- You gain a flying speed of 60 feet.
- When you deal fire or necrotic damage with a sorcerer spell, you deal an extra 1d6 damage of that type.
- You can cast *fireball* at 5th level without expending a spell slot (once per transformation).

Wizard: School of Hemomancy (Blood Magic)

Hemomancers are wizards who have discovered that blood — the essence of life — is the most potent arcane fuel. By sacrificing their own vitality, they can amplify their spells to devastating effect. This school is feared and outlawed in most civilized lands.

Integrating into an existing character: Wizards choose their school at level 2, so this is best for new characters. For an existing wizard, a DM can allow a school change via *TCoE* retraining (swap your subclass at any level-up with DM approval) if the wizard discovers a forbidden spellbook, studies under a hemomancer NPC, or is forced to cast using their own blood in a desperate moment (e.g., no components available, bleeding out, trapped). The key story beat: the wizard discovers that blood works *better* than normal components, and the temptation to keep using it grows. Pair with finding *blood reading* or *necrotic grasp* in a villain's spellbook.

Blood Scribe

2nd-level School of Hemomancy feature

You can use your own blood as ink when copying spells into your spellbook. When you do so, the gold cost is halved, but you take 1d4 necrotic damage per spell level (which can't be reduced). Spells copied this way have a faint reddish tint on the page.

You also gain proficiency in Medicine if you don't already have it.

Sanguine Sacrifice

2nd-level School of Hemomancy feature

When you cast a wizard spell of 1st level or higher that deals damage or forces a saving throw, you can choose to empower it by sacrificing your blood. You take necrotic damage equal to 1d8 per level of the spell slot used (this damage can't be reduced or prevented). In exchange, choose one:

- **Amplify**: One damage roll of the spell deals maximum damage instead of rolling.
- **Extend**: The spell's duration is doubled (if it has a duration of 1 minute or longer).
- **Sanguine Focus**: One target of your choice has disadvantage on its first saving throw against the spell.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, regaining all uses after a long rest.

Design Note: Sanguine Focus grants disadvantage on one target's first save — powerful but bounded. Unlike a flat DC increase, it doesn't compound across multiple targets and doesn't violate bounded accuracy. The 1d8/level self-damage (avg 4.5/level) keeps the cost meaningful at all tiers.

Crimson Ward

6th-level School of Hemomancy feature

When you take damage, you can use your reaction to expend a spell slot and reduce the damage by 2d8 per level of the spell slot expended. If the damage is reduced to 0, you gain temporary hit points equal to the remaining reduction.

Blood Puppet

10th-level School of Hemomancy feature

You can spend 1 minute and touch a creature that has blood. The target must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against your spell save DC or become linked to you for 8 hours. While linked, you can use your action to force the target to make a Constitution saving throw. On a failure, you can control the target's movement on its next turn (but not its actions). The target is aware of the manipulation.

You can maintain one blood link at a time. The link ends if you or the target are on different planes, or if the target takes radiant damage.

Master of the Red Art

14th-level School of Hemomancy feature

The necrotic damage you take from Sanguine Sacrifice is reduced by half your proficiency bonus (rounded down, minimum 1d8 per spell level regardless of reduction).

Additionally, when you reduce a creature to 0 hit points with a wizard spell that deals necrotic damage, you can draw power from its death. You regain one expended spell slot of a level equal to half your proficiency bonus or lower

(rounded down). Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Design Note: Self-damage reduction is now half proficiency (max −3 at 17th level) instead of INT mod (−5). A 7th-level spell still costs at least 4d8 (avg 18 HP) — meaningful but not crippling. Slot recovery requires *you* to kill with *necrotic spell damage* (not passive ally triggers), is capped at 3rd-level slots, and is 1/short rest — no resource loops.

Artificer: Fleshsmith

Fleshsmiths are artificers who have turned their inventive genius toward the modification of living tissue. They graft extra limbs, implant magical organs, and reshape flesh like clay. Their creations are horrifying but undeniably effective.

Designer's Note: This subclass draws from the body horror themes of the Book of Vile Darkness and the artificer's tinkering nature. It's inspired by the Simic Hybrid race and the flesh golem.

Integrating into an existing character: Artificers choose their specialty at level 3. A Fleshsmith origin works well for an artificer who was always interested in biology but crossed a line — maybe they experimented on a corpse, accepted a commission from a necromancer, or discovered that living tissue is a better crafting material than metal. The grafts can be introduced gradually: the artificer starts by grafting onto willing NPCs or animals, then themselves. For an existing artificer switching specialties via *TCoE* retraining, the trigger could be finding a Fleshsmith's lab notes, or being forced to perform emergency surgery with no tools except magic and raw tissue.

Fleshsmith Spells

Artificer Level	Spell
3rd	*false life*, *inflict wounds*
5th	*alter self*, *enlarge/reduce*
9th	*vampiric touch*, *haste*
13th	*polymorph*, *stoneskin*
17th	*creation*, *reincarnate*

Flesh Graft

3rd-level Fleshsmith feature

You can spend 8 hours and 200 gp worth of alchemical materials to graft a biological enhancement onto a willing creature (including yourself). Grafts require living tissue to sustain — a creature with one or more grafts must consume twice the normal amount of food and water.

Graft Limits: A creature can bear a number of grafts equal to half its Constitution modifier (rounded up, minimum 1). Grafts you create count against your own attunement slots (as if you were attuned to them), to a maximum of your proficiency bonus. You can dismiss a graft you created as an action if you are within 30 feet of the creature bearing it. Removing a graft otherwise takes 1 hour and deals 2d6 necrotic damage.

Graft Instability: At the end of each long rest, a creature bearing grafts must succeed on a Constitution saving throw (DC 10 + number of grafts it bears) or gain one level of exhaustion. *Lesser restoration* or your Fleshsmith class features can stabilize a graft for 24 hours, removing this saving throw requirement until the next long rest.

Choose from the following grafts:

- **Chitinous Plating**: +1 bonus to AC (doesn't stack with other natural armor or with shields).

- **Darkvision Eyes**: Gain darkvision 60 ft. (or extend existing darkvision by 30 ft.).
- **Grasping Tendril**: Gain a 10-ft. reach tendril. It can manipulate objects, open doors, and grapple (using your Intelligence modifier for the check), but can't wield weapons.
- **Venomous Fangs**: Gain a bite attack (1d6 piercing + 1d4 poison damage).
- **Reinforced Skeleton**: Advantage on saving throws against being knocked prone or moved against your will.
- **Adrenal Gland**: Once per long rest, gain advantage on initiative rolls and +10 ft. speed for 1 minute.

Design Note: Grafts now cost the Fleshsmith attunement slots, preventing a party-wide buff factory. The 200 gp cost and 8-hour crafting time make them meaningful investments, not field surgery. The instability save creates ongoing maintenance — grafts are powerful but demand upkeep, reinforcing the body-horror fantasy.

Aberrant Homunculus

3rd-level Fleshsmith feature

Your homunculus servant (if you have one) can be a flesh construct instead of a mechanical one. It gains resistance to necrotic damage and its attacks deal an extra 1d4 necrotic damage.

If you don't use the homunculus servant infusion, you can instead create a **Tiny flesh familiar** (as *find familiar*, but it is an aberration, not a beast/fey/fiend).

Enhanced Grafts

5th-level Fleshsmith feature

You gain access to additional grafts:

- **Wings of Sinew**: As a bonus action, you can unfurl wings of sinew and muscle, gaining a flying speed of 30 feet for 10 minutes. The wings then retract and can't be used again until you finish a short or long rest. (Requires 2 graft slots. Only available at 9th level or higher.)
- **Regenerative Tissue**: When you spend Hit Dice during a short rest, you regain additional hit points equal to your Constitution modifier for each Hit Die spent. Additionally, when you are stabilized while at 0 hit points, you regain 1 hit point at the start of your next turn.
- **Toxic Blood**: When a creature hits you with a melee attack within 5 ft., it takes 1d6 poison damage.
- **Extra Arm**: Gain an additional arm. You can hold an extra object or shield, but can't make additional attacks with it.

Design Note: Wings are now limited duration (10 min, 1/short rest) and level-gated to 9th — matching official flight timing (Draconic Sorcerer 14th, Totem Barbarian 14th are permanent; Winged Tiefling is racial at 1st but controversial). Regeneration moved from passive per-round healing (which removes attrition) to short rest efficiency (which preserves it).

Master Fleshcrafter

9th-level Fleshsmith feature

Your grafts improve:

- Grafts you create cost half the normal gold (100 gp instead of 200 gp) and take half the time (4 hours instead of 8).
- A creature bearing your grafts has advantage on the Graft Instability Constitution saving throw.
- When you cast a spell that restores hit points, you can target a creature with a graft to also remove one condition affecting it (poisoned, diseased, or blinded).

Apotheosis of Flesh

15th-level Fleshsmith feature

You can spend 8 hours and 1,000 gp to perform a **Greater Flesh Graft** on a willing creature. Choose one:

- **Fiendish Transformation**: The creature gains resistance to fire and poison damage, and its melee attacks deal an extra 1d6 necrotic damage.
- **Aberrant Evolution**: The creature gains telepathy 30 ft., advantage on Intelligence saving throws, and can cast *detect thoughts* once per long rest.
- **Undying Flesh**: The creature no longer ages, doesn't need to eat or drink, and has advantage on death saving throws.

A creature can have only one Greater Flesh Graft at a time. Removing it requires *greater restoration* or a 24-hour procedure.

Bard: College of Requiem

Bards of the College of Requiem have learned that the most powerful music is the music of death. Their songs are dirges, their instruments are strung with the sinew of the dead, and their performances can literally stop hearts. They are mourners, eulogists, and executioners — often all at once.

Designer's Note: The bard is conspicuously absent from the book's subclass conversions despite having a full evil spell list in Chapter 6. This subclass gives bards a necromantic identity distinct from the College of Spirits (*VRGtR*) and College of Whispers (*XGtE* p. 16), which already lean dark but aren't explicitly evil.

Integrating into an existing character: A bard who witnesses a significant death — a party member, a loved one, or a mass casualty event — might find their music shifting from celebration to mourning. At level 3, the bard's performances take on a funereal quality. They don't stop being a bard; they just discover that the music of endings is more powerful than the music of beginnings. For a bard already past level 3, *TCoE* retraining (swap your subclass at any level-up with DM approval) works well with a story beat: the bard attends a funeral, hears a dirge that resonates with something deep inside them, and their Bardic Inspiration changes from uplifting to haunting. Pairs naturally with the evil bard spells from Chapter 6.

Bonus Proficiencies

3rd-level College of Requiem feature

You gain proficiency with medium armor and the Medicine skill. You also learn the *spare the dying* cantrip, which counts as a bard cantrip for you and has a range of 30 feet.

Dirge of the Fallen

3rd-level College of Requiem feature

You can use your Bardic Inspiration to channel the power of death. When a creature within 60 feet of you drops to 0 hit points, you can use your reaction to expend one use of Bardic Inspiration and choose one of the following effects:

- **Requiem**: You play a mournful note. Each hostile creature within 30 feet of the fallen creature that can hear you must succeed on a **Wisdom saving throw** against your spell save DC or be frightened of you until the end of your next turn.
- **Harvest**: You draw power from the departing soul. You or one ally within 30 feet regains hit points equal to the Bardic Inspiration die + your Charisma modifier.

- **Encore**: The fallen creature can immediately use its reaction to make one melee weapon attack before it falls. (It still drops to 0 hit points afterward.)

Deathsinger

6th-level College of Requiem feature

Your connection to death deepens. You gain the following benefits:

- You learn the *speak with dead* spell. It doesn't count against your number of bard spells known, and you can cast it as a ritual.
- When you cast a bard spell that deals damage, you can change the damage type to necrotic.
- **Dirge of Compulsion**: When you use your Bardic Inspiration feature, you can choose to perform a dirge instead of inspiring an ally (expending the Bardic Inspiration die). Each undead creature of your choice within 60 feet that can hear you must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw against your spell save DC or be **compelled** by your music until the end of your next turn. A compelled undead can't take reactions and must use its movement to move toward you by the safest available route. This feature has no effect on undead with an Intelligence score of 8 or higher. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Design Note: Undead are immune to the charmed condition by design — it's a core monster trait that defines how players interact with undead encounters. Rather than overriding that immunity, Dirge of Compulsion creates a new, weaker effect ("compelled") that forces movement but doesn't grant control. The INT 8 cap excludes vampires, liches, mummy lords, and other intelligent undead. The 1/short rest limit and Bardic Inspiration cost ensure meaningful resource friction.

Master of the Final Song

14th-level College of Requiem feature

You can play the song that ends all songs. As an action, you can expend two uses of Bardic Inspiration to perform a **Requiem of Annihilation**. Choose one creature within 60 feet that can hear you. The target must make a **Constitution saving throw** against your spell save DC.

On a failure, the target takes 6d6 necrotic damage, and its hit point maximum is reduced by half the damage dealt (vile damage — see Chapter 2: Evil Effects). If this reduces the target's hit point maximum to 0, the target dies.

On a success, the target takes half damage and its hit point maximum is unaffected.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

Balance Note: Compare to College of Whispers' 14th-level Mantle of Whispers (utility/infiltration) and College of Valor's Battle Magic (action economy). This feature trades the Whispers bard's social power for direct combat power. The 2-Inspiration cost and 1/long rest limit keep it in check.

Rogue: Shade Archetype

Shades are rogues who have merged with shadow itself. Through dark rituals, exposure to the Shadowfell, or bargains with entities of darkness, they have become partially incorporeal — existing in the liminal space between the Material Plane and the Plane of Shadow. They are the ultimate infiltrators, assassins, and spies.

Designer's Note: The Rogue already has the Cancer Mage from the book's conversion. This second option provides a shadow/stealth-focused alternative inspired by the Shadowfell content in the *DMG* (p. 51) and the shadow monk (*PHB* p. 80). It pairs well with the Shadow Step dark gift.

Integrating into an existing character: A rogue who spends time in the Shadowfell, is cursed by a shadow creature, or makes a bargain with a dark entity might find themselves slipping between planes. At level 3, the rogue notices they cast less of a shadow, that darkness feels comfortable rather than threatening, and that they can *almost* step through walls. For a rogue past level 3, *TCoE* retraining (swap your subclass at any level-up with DM approval) works with a Shadowfell exposure event — perhaps the party passes through a shadow crossing, and the rogue comes out... different. Unlike the Cancer Mage (which is about disease and body horror), the Shade is about stealth and infiltration taken to a supernatural extreme.

Shadow Merge

3rd-level Shade feature

You can partially merge with shadows. While you are in dim light or darkness, you can use a bonus action to become **shadowy** until the end of your next turn or until you enter bright light. While shadowy:

- You have advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks.
- You can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch without squeezing.
- You have resistance to necrotic and cold damage.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, regaining all uses after a long rest.

Balance Note: Compare to Way of Shadow monk (shadow teleport at 6th) and Gloom Stalker ranger (invisibility in darkness at 3rd). The Shade's 3rd-level feature gives limited resistances (necrotic + cold only, not all damage) and requires dim light/darkness. The squeeze-through-gaps ability is primarily utility/infiltration.

Eyes of Darkness

3rd-level Shade feature

You gain darkvision out to 120 feet. If you already have darkvision, its range increases by 60 feet. You can see normally in magical darkness created by you or your allies.

Design Note: Full magical darkness vision as a free 3rd-level subclass feature is too strong — Devil's Sight costs an invocation slot. Narrowing to "you or your allies" preserves party synergy (e.g., a warlock's *darkness* spell) while closing the Shadow Sorcerer 1 / Shade Rogue 3 multiclass abuse case where enemy *darkness* becomes irrelevant for free.

Shadow Strike

9th-level Shade feature

When you deal Sneak Attack damage to a creature while you are in dim light or darkness, you can choose to make the Sneak Attack damage necrotic instead of the weapon's normal type. If you do, the target must succeed on a **Constitution saving throw** (DC 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Dexterity modifier) or have its speed reduced by half until the end of its next turn.

One with Shadow

13th-level Shade feature

You can cast *greater invisibility* on yourself once without expending a spell slot. While invisible from this feature, you also leave no footprints, make no sound, and are undetectable by *detect magic* (though *truesight* and *see invisibility* still work). You regain the ability to do so after a short or long rest.

Additionally, you have resistance to necrotic damage.

Shadow Step

17th-level Shade feature

While in dim light or darkness, you can use a bonus action to teleport up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space you can see that is also in dim light or darkness. Immediately after teleporting, you have advantage on the first melee attack you make before the end of your turn.

Additionally, when you take damage, you can use your reaction to become incorporeal until the start of your next turn. While incorporeal, you have resistance to all damage except force and radiant, and you can move through creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. If you end your turn inside an object, you take 5 (1d10) force damage. Once you use this incorporeal reaction, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Balance Note: Compare to Arcane Trickster's 17th-level Spell Thief (niche but powerful) and Thief's 17th-level Thief's Reflexes (extra turn). Shadow Step's teleport mirrors the Shadow Monk's 6th-level feature but arrives much later and adds the incorporeal reaction. The 1/short rest limit on incorporeality prevents abuse.

Homebrew Racial Options

⚠ **HOMEBREW**: This content is **not** from the original Book of Vile Darkness. These racial options draw from established D&D lore (tiefling variants, dhampir, etc.) and are designed to complement the evil-themed content in this book. Some options reference official 5e content from *Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft*, *Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes*, and *Tasha's Cauldron of Everything*.

How to Use in Your Campaign

Level 1 (character creation). Races and lineages are chosen at character creation. The new lineages (Fiend-Scarred, Blighted, Soulbound) follow the *VRGtR* lineage format — they can replace or overlay any existing race.

Existing campaign — mid-game lineage adoption: Unlike standard races, lineages can be gained mid-campaign through transformative events:

- **Fiend-Scarred**: After surviving a fiend encounter, possession, or failed exorcism
- **Blighted**: After prolonged exposure to vile damage, a malign site, or a cursed land
- **Soulbound**: After making a dark bargain, dying and being raised by dark magic, or touching an evil artifact

Racial feats: Available at any ASI level (4, 8, 12, 16, 19). See Campaign Integration Guide: Feat Timing.

Related content: Vile Gods and Races (Ch. 1) for evil deity domains and racial lore. Evil Backgrounds for matching backstories. Dark Gifts for supernatural boons that don't require a race change.

Official 5e Races with Evil Themes

These existing 5e races already fit evil campaigns without modification:

Race	Source	Evil Theme
Tiefling (all variants)	*PHB*, *MToF*	Infernal heritage, devil bloodline
Drow	*PHB*	Lolth worship, Underdark cruelty

Race	Source	Evil Theme
Duergar	*MToF*	Deep dwarf tyranny, psionic cruelty
Yuan-ti Pureblood	*VGtM*	Serpent god worship, cold manipulation
Goblinoid (Bugbear, Goblin, Hobgoblin)	*VGtM*	Conquest, brutality, servitude
Kobold	*VGtM*	Trap-making, dragon worship, cunning cruelty
Orc	*VGtM*	Gruumsh worship, destruction
Dhampir	*VRGtR*	Vampiric hunger, undead lineage
Hexblood	*VRGtR*	Hag lineage, fey corruption
Reborn	*VRGtR*	Undead resurrection, lost identity

New Lineages

The following lineages use the format from *Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft* — they can be applied to any race, representing a transformative event.

Fiend-Scarred

You survived direct contact with a fiend — possession, a devil's bargain gone wrong, or exposure to raw Abyssal energy. The experience left its mark on your body and soul. Fiendish power now courses through you, a constant reminder of what touched you.

Creature Type. You are a Humanoid. However, *detect evil and good* and similar magic registers you as a fiend.

Size. Small or Medium (your choice).

Speed. 30 feet.

Fiendish Mark. You bear a visible mark of your encounter: a burn scar in the shape of a fiendish sigil, eyes that glow faintly red in darkness, or a hand that is perpetually cold. This mark can't be hidden by mundane means, though *disguise self* or similar magic works.

Abyssal/Infernal Resilience. Choose one when you gain this lineage:

- **Abyssal**: You have resistance to poison damage and advantage on saving throws against the poisoned condition.
- **Infernal**: You have resistance to fire damage.

Fiendish Legacy. You know the *thaumaturgy* cantrip. Starting at 3rd level, you can cast *hellish rebuke* (Abyssal: cold damage; Infernal: fire damage) once per long rest. Starting at 5th level, you can cast *darkness* once per long rest. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for these spells.

Whispers of the Pit. You can speak, read, and write Abyssal or Infernal (matching your resilience choice). You have advantage on Intelligence (Arcana) checks related to fiends.

Blighted

Corruption has seeped into your very being — perhaps from prolonged exposure to a cursed land, an evil artifact, or a necromantic ritual gone wrong. Your body is partially decayed, your skin mottled with dark veins, and plants wither at your touch. Yet this corruption grants you terrible power.

Creature Type. You are a Humanoid. However, you register as undead to *detect evil and good* and Divine Sense.

Size. Small or Medium (your choice).

Speed. 30 feet.

Necrotic Resilience. You have resistance to necrotic damage. You also don't need to eat or drink, though you can if you choose.

Withering Touch. As an action, you can touch a creature and force it to make a Constitution saving throw (DC 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier). On a failure, the target takes 1d8 necrotic damage and you regain hit points equal to your Constitution modifier (minimum 1). This damage increases to 2d8 at 5th level, 3d8 at 11th level, and 4d8 at 17th level. You can use this feature a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, regaining all uses after a long rest.

Corruption Aura. Nonmagical plants within 5 feet of you wither and die over the course of 1 minute. You have disadvantage on Charisma (Persuasion) checks with good-aligned creatures that can see your blighted features, but advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks.

Darkvision. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light.

Soulbound

Your soul has been partially claimed by a powerful entity — a fiend, a lich, or a dark god. Part of your essence exists on another plane, tethered to you by an invisible chain. This connection grants you unnatural awareness and resilience, but the entity can tug on the chain at any time.

Creature Type. Humanoid.

Size. Small or Medium (your choice).

Speed. 30 feet.

Tethered Soul. You have advantage on death saving throws. When you are reduced to 0 hit points but not killed outright, you can choose to drop to 1 hit point instead. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

Otherworldly Perception. You have proficiency in the Insight skill. You can also sense the presence of fiends, undead, and celestials within 30 feet of you, though you can't identify their exact location or type.

Soul Chain. You can communicate telepathically with the entity that holds part of your soul, regardless of distance (as long as you are on the same plane). The entity can also initiate communication. Once per long rest, you can ask the entity one question, which it must answer truthfully (though it may be cryptic or incomplete). The DM plays the entity.

Dark Boon. Choose one of the following:

- **Fiendish Boon**: You know the *friends* cantrip. Once per long rest, you can cast *charm person*.
- **Undead Boon**: You know the *spare the dying* cantrip (it has a range of 30 feet for you). Once per long rest, you can cast *false life* at 2nd level.
- **Dark Divine Boon**: You know the *guidance* cantrip. Once per long rest, you can cast *bane*.

Charisma is your spellcasting ability for these spells.

Tiefling Variant: Abyssal Tiefling

While most tieflings trace their heritage to the Nine Hells, Abyssal tieflings descend from demons. They are more chaotic and unpredictable than their infernal cousins, with mutations that shift and change over time.

Designer's Note: *Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes* introduced tiefling subraces tied to specific archdevils. This variant provides a demonic alternative, inspired by the Abyss content in Chapter 7.

Use the standard tiefling traits with the following changes:

Ability Score Increase. Your Charisma score increases by 2, and your Constitution score increases by 1.

Abyssal Resistance. You have resistance to poison damage (instead of fire).

Abyssal Legacy. You know the *poison spray* cantrip. At 3rd level, you can cast *ray of sickness* once per long rest. At 5th level, you can cast *crown of madness* once per long rest. Charisma is your spellcasting ability.

Chaotic Form. After each long rest, roll a d6. On a 1, you gain a minor cosmetic mutation that lasts until your next long rest (DM's choice or roll on the Warp Touch table in Chapter 2, results 41–70 only).

Racial Feats

These feats are available to characters of specific races or lineages.

Fiendish Constitution

Prerequisite: Tiefling, Fiend-Scarred, or Soulbound

Your fiendish heritage has hardened your body against the hazards of the Lower Planes.

- Increase your Constitution score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You are immune to disease.
- You have advantage on saving throws against poison.
- When you take fire or necrotic damage, you can use your reaction to gain resistance to that damage type until the start of your next turn (including against the triggering damage). You can use this reaction a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, regaining all uses after a long rest.

Abyssal Adaptation

Prerequisite: Any race, must have visited the Abyss or been exposed to Abyssal energy

Exposure to the Abyss has changed you.

- Increase one ability score of your choice by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You have advantage on saving throws against madness effects.
- You can cast *detect evil and good* once per long rest without expending a spell slot. When you do, you also learn the exact creature type of any fiend detected.
- You gain one minor permanent mutation (cosmetic only, chosen with the DM). This mutation can't be removed by anything short of *wish*.

Infernal Negotiator

Prerequisite: Tiefling or any character who has signed an infernal contract

You understand the language of infernal contracts better than most.

- Increase your Charisma or Intelligence score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You have advantage on Intelligence (Investigation) checks to find loopholes in contracts, agreements, or legal documents.
- You can cast *zone of truth* once per long rest without expending a spell slot. When you cast it this way, you are immune to its effects.
- When a fiend attempts to charm you or compel you to sign a contract, you have advantage on the saving throw.

Blighted Resilience

Prerequisite: Blighted lineage or any character who has taken vile damage (see Ch. 2)

The corruption in your body has stabilized, becoming a source of strength rather than weakness.

- Increase your Constitution score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- When you take necrotic damage, you can reduce it by 1d6 + your Constitution modifier (minimum 0). You can use this a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, regaining all uses after a long rest.
- You are immune to disease. Your body is too hostile an environment for pathogens to survive.
- **Drawback**: Healing spells cast on you by *good-aligned* casters restore only half their normal hit points (rounded down). Healing from evil or neutral sources works normally.

Integrating into an existing character: This feat represents a character who has been exposed to enough corruption that their body has adapted. Take it at any ASI level (4, 8, 12, 16, 19 — *PHB* p. 15, the levels where you choose between an Ability Score Increase or a feat). The story trigger is surviving prolonged exposure to vile damage, a cursed land, or a necromantic ritual.

Shadowfell Touched

Prerequisite: Any race, must have visited the Shadowfell or been exposed to shadow energy (e.g., a shadow crossing, a shadow dragon's lair, or the Shade rogue archetype)

The Shadowfell has left its mark on your soul. You exist partially in shadow.

- Increase your Dexterity or Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You learn the *minor illusion* cantrip if you don't already know it. You also learn *shadow blade* (*XGtE* p. 164 — creates a sword made of solidified shadow that deals 2d8 psychic damage and has advantage on attacks in dim light/darkness). You can cast *shadow blade* once without a spell slot, regaining the ability after a long rest. Charisma is your spellcasting ability.
- While in dim light or darkness, you can use a bonus action to become invisible until the end of your current turn. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Integrating into an existing character: Take this at any ASI level. The trigger is any significant Shadowfell exposure — passing through a shadow crossing, being attacked by a shadow, spending time in the Shadowfell, or using the Shade archetype's abilities extensively enough that the shadow starts to stick.

Undead Kinship

Prerequisite: Dhampir (VRGtR — a lineage with vampiric traits like a bite attack and spider climb), Reborn (VRGtR — a lineage for characters who died and came back, with deathless nature and knowledge from a past life), Blighted lineage, or any character who has been raised from the dead

Your brush with death has given you an affinity for the undead.

- Increase your Wisdom or Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.

- Unintelligent undead (Int 5 or lower) don't attack you unless commanded to or unless you attack them first. Intelligent undead sense your kinship and their initial attitude toward you is one step more favorable (hostile → indifferent, indifferent → friendly).
- You can cast *speak with dead* once per long rest without a spell slot or components. The corpse doesn't need a mouth — you communicate through the residual death energy.
- You have advantage on Charisma checks made to interact with undead creatures.

Integrating into an existing character: Take this at any ASI level. The trigger is dying and being raised, spending time among undead, or gaining the Blighted or Dhampir lineage. The character has crossed the threshold of death and come back with an understanding of what lies beyond.

Homebrew Evil Backgrounds

⚠ **HOMEBREW**: This content is **not** from the original Book of Vile Darkness. These backgrounds are designed for campaigns using this book's themes. They follow the standard 5e background format (*PHB* Chapter 4) and can be used alongside official backgrounds.

How to Use in Your Campaign

Level 1 (character creation only, normally). Backgrounds are chosen at character creation (*PHB* p. 125 — each background gives you 2 skill proficiencies, tool/language proficiencies, starting equipment, a roleplaying feature, and personality traits).

Existing campaign — background swap: *TCoE* (p. 8 — "you can customize your background by replacing one feature with another, and swapping skill/tool/language proficiencies") allows customizing backgrounds. A DM can let a PC adopt a new background feature mid-campaign if their story justifies it (e.g., a PC who joins a cult gains the Cult Initiate's **Dark Network** feature). The skill proficiencies don't change, but the feature and personality traits can.

Pairing suggestions:

- **Cult Initiate** pairs well with Archfiend Domain cleric or Demonologist warlock
- **Grave Robber** pairs well with Cancer Mage rogue or Hemomancer wizard
- **Infernal Contractor** pairs well with Diabolist warlock or any character using dark bargains
- **Escaped Thrall** pairs well with any class — great for characters who start good and encounter evil content mid-campaign

Related content: Racial Options for matching lineages. Evil Trinket Table for starting trinkets.

Official 5e Backgrounds with Evil Potential

These existing backgrounds already work well for evil characters:

Background	Evil Angle
Criminal	Organized crime, assassination, smuggling
Charlatan	Con artist, identity theft, manipulation
Urchin	Desperate survival, gang membership
Soldier	War crimes, mercenary work, desertion
Noble	Tyranny, political corruption, decadence
Acolyte	Cult membership, dark god worship

Background	Evil Angle
Hermit	Forbidden knowledge, dark experiments
Sage	Obsessive pursuit of forbidden lore

New Evil Backgrounds

Cult Initiate

You were raised in or recruited into a cult dedicated to a dark power — a demon lord, archdevil, elder evil, or forbidden deity. You may have escaped, or you may still serve. Either way, the cult's teachings are burned into your mind.

Skill Proficiencies: Religion, Deception
Tool Proficiencies: Poisoner's kit
Languages: One of your choice (typically Abyssal or Infernal)
Equipment: A cult robe, a holy symbol of your dark patron (hidden), a vial of sacrificial blood (dried), a set of common clothes, and a belt pouch containing 10 gp.

Feature: Dark Network

You know the secret signs, passwords, and meeting places of your cult (or cults like it). In any settlement of 1,000 or more people, you can find a cult contact within 1d4 days who can provide you with shelter, information about local evil activity, or access to black market goods. The contact expects a favor in return.

Suggested Characteristics

d6	Personality Trait
1	I speak in religious metaphors constantly, even when it makes people uncomfortable.
2	I'm always watching for signs and omens from my patron.
3	I'm unfailingly polite — it's the best disguise.
4	I test everyone I meet to see if they're worthy of recruitment.
5	I keep a journal of my "spiritual journey" in coded language.
6	I flinch at bright light and loud noises — old habits from underground rituals.

d6	Ideal
1	**Power.** The cult promised me power, and I intend to collect. (Evil)
2	**Faith.** My patron is real and their plan is righteous. (Any Evil)
3	**Freedom.** I escaped the cult and will never be controlled again. (Chaotic)
4	**Knowledge.** The cult taught me things no university could. (Neutral)
5	**Revenge.** The cult destroyed my old life. I'll destroy them. (Any)
6	**Belonging.** The cult was the only family I ever had. (Any)

d6	Bond
1	I still serve my patron in secret.
2	I'm searching for a cult member who betrayed me.
3	I have a loved one still trapped in the cult.
4	I possess a fragment of a dark artifact the cult wants back.
5	My patron speaks to me in dreams. I can't ignore the visions.

d6	Bond
6	I was promised a reward that I haven't yet received.

d6	Flaw
1	I still instinctively obey authority figures who remind me of the cult leader.
2	I can't resist the urge to recruit others to my cause.
3	I panic when I'm alone — the cult taught me that solitude invites possession.
4	I secretly enjoy the rituals. The blood, the chanting — I miss it.
5	I trust no one. Everyone is a potential spy or traitor.
6	I hear my patron's voice even when I don't want to.

Grave Robber

You made your living — such as it was — by digging up the dead. Whether you sold corpses to necromancers, stripped valuables from tombs, or harvested components for alchemists, you've spent more time with the dead than the living.

Skill Proficiencies: Investigation, Stealth
Tool Proficiencies: Thieves' tools, herbalism kit
Equipment: A crowbar, a dark hooded cloak, a shovel, a sack, a set of dark common clothes, and a belt pouch containing 15 gp.

Feature: Know the Dead

You have an instinct for where the dead are buried and how to reach them. You can identify the approximate age, cause of death, and social status of a corpse with a cursory examination (no check required). You also know the location of cemeteries, crypts, catacombs, and mass graves in any settlement you visit, and you can find a buyer for corpses or grave goods within 1d4 days.

Suggested Characteristics

d6	Personality Trait
1	I talk to corpses. They're better listeners than most people.
2	I have a morbid sense of humor that makes others deeply uncomfortable.
3	I'm fastidiously clean — overcompensating for my profession.
4	I collect small mementos from the dead. Just to remember them.
5	I'm completely desensitized to death and gore.
6	I always check if someone is actually dead before moving on. Always.

d6	Ideal
1	**Pragmatism.** The dead don't need their things. The living do. (Neutral)
2	**Knowledge.** Every corpse tells a story. I want to read them all. (Any)
3	**Greed.** There's gold in them graves. (Evil)
4	**Service.** I provide a necessary service to those who need... materials. (Neutral)
5	**Respect.** I always say a prayer before I dig. It's only right. (Lawful)
6	**Defiance.** Death is the enemy. I rob its domain out of spite. (Chaotic)

d6	Bond
1	I'm looking for a specific grave — someone I need to find.

d6	Bond
2	A necromancer is my best client. I can't afford to lose them.
3	I accidentally disturbed something that should have stayed buried. It's following me.
4	I found something in a grave that changed my life. I need to know what it means.
5	I owe a debt to the person who taught me the trade.
6	I'm saving up to give someone a proper burial — the one thing I couldn't do before.

d6	Flaw
1	I can't resist opening a coffin, even when I really should.
2	I smell faintly of earth and decay, no matter how much I wash.
3	I'm deeply superstitious about the undead — I've seen too much.
4	I pocket small valuables without thinking about it.
5	I have nightmares about the dead coming back for what I took.
6	I undervalue living people. They're all just future corpses to me.

Infernal Contractor

You worked — or still work — as an intermediary between mortals and the forces of Hell. You draft contracts, negotiate terms, and ensure that both parties uphold their end of the bargain. You may be a willing servant of Hell, a mortal lawyer who stumbled into infernal business, or someone trying to find loopholes to free the damned.

Skill Proficiencies: Persuasion, Investigation
Tool Proficiencies: Calligrapher's supplies, forgery kit
Languages: Infernal
Equipment: Calligrapher's supplies, a leather-bound contract folio (empty), a quill made from an imp's feather, fine clothes, and a belt pouch containing 25 gp.

Feature: Letter of the Law

You understand the structure and language of binding agreements, both mundane and magical. You can identify an infernal contract on sight and determine its general terms with 10 minutes of study. You have advantage on Intelligence (Investigation) checks to find loopholes in any written agreement. Additionally, devils of CR 5 or lower will parley with you before attacking, recognizing you as someone who understands the rules.

Suggested Characteristics

d6	Personality Trait
1	I never make a promise I don't intend to keep — to the letter.
2	I read the fine print on everything. Menus, wanted posters, everything.
3	I speak in precise, legalistic language even in casual conversation.
4	I always carry a contract — you never know when an opportunity will arise.
5	I smile when I negotiate. It unnerves people.
6	I keep meticulous records of every deal I've ever made.

d6	Ideal
1	**Order.** Contracts are the foundation of civilization. Even Hell respects them. (Lawful)
2	**Profit.** Every deal is an opportunity. I always come out ahead. (Evil)
3	**Justice.** I find loopholes to free those trapped by unfair contracts. (Good)
4	**Knowledge.** Infernal law is the oldest legal system. I study it for its elegance. (Neutral)

d6	Ideal
5	**Power.** The pen is mightier than the sword — especially when it's signed in blood. (Evil)
6	**Balance.** Both sides should benefit. That's what makes a good deal. (Neutral)

d6	Bond
1	I signed a contract myself. I'm looking for a way out.
2	Someone I love signed a contract. I need to free them.
3	A specific devil is my patron and employer.
4	I possess a contract that binds a powerful fiend. It wants it back.
5	I'm compiling a book of infernal contract law. It will be my masterwork.
6	I made a deal that went wrong. Someone died. I carry that guilt.

d6	Flaw
1	I can't help but try to make a deal in every situation.
2	I see people as assets and liabilities, not friends.
3	I'm terrified of dying — I know exactly where my soul is going.
4	I trust written agreements more than people's words.
5	I've become so used to deception that I lie even when the truth would serve me better.
6	I secretly admire the efficiency of Hell's bureaucracy.

Escaped Thrall

You were enslaved — not by chains, but by magic. A fiend, a lich, a mind flayer, or another powerful entity dominated your will and forced you to serve. You've broken free, but the scars remain. You remember everything you did under their control.

Skill Proficiencies: Insight, Survival
Tool Proficiencies: None
Languages: Two of your choice (languages your master spoke)
Equipment: A set of tattered clothes, a broken chain or collar (your former binding), a crude map of the area where you were held, a trinket from your former life, and a belt pouch containing 5 gp.

Feature: Broken Chains

Your experience with mental domination has hardened your mind. You can sense when someone is attempting to read your thoughts or influence your emotions (you feel a "pressure" but don't automatically know the source). Additionally, you can recognize the signs of magical domination in others — a DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals if a creature you can see is charmed or under the effects of an enchantment spell.

Suggested Characteristics

d6	Personality Trait
1	I flinch when someone gives me an order, even a friendly one.
2	I'm hypervigilant. I check every room for exits and threats.
3	I don't sleep well. The nightmares are too vivid.
4	I'm fiercely protective of anyone I see being controlled or manipulated.
5	I speak very little. I spent years unable to speak my own thoughts.
6	I hoard food and supplies. I never know when I'll be free to get more.

d6	Ideal
1	**Freedom.** No one should ever be controlled. I'll fight to ensure it. (Chaotic)
2	**Revenge.** My former master will pay for what they did to me. (Any)
3	**Strength.** I will never be weak enough to be enslaved again. (Any)
4	**Compassion.** I know what suffering feels like. I won't inflict it on others. (Good)
5	**Control.** I need to be in control of everything. I can't let go. (Lawful)
6	**Nihilism.** Free will is an illusion. We're all slaves to something. (Neutral Evil)

d6	Bond
1	Others are still enslaved where I was held. I must free them.
2	My former master is hunting me. I must stay ahead.
3	I remember a kindness shown to me during my captivity. I owe that person everything.
4	I did terrible things while enslaved. I need to make amends.
5	I have knowledge my master didn't want me to have. It's valuable — and dangerous.
6	I'm searching for someone who was enslaved alongside me.

d6	Flaw
1	I sometimes freeze when confronted with authority. Old habits.
2	I have violent outbursts when I feel trapped or cornered.
3	I trust no one completely. Not even my closest allies.
4	I'm addicted to a substance my master used to keep me compliant.
5	Part of me misses the simplicity of servitude. I hate myself for it.
6	I sometimes hear my master's voice in my head, even though I know they're not there.

Plague Doctor

You once practiced medicine — or something that passed for it. Whether you were a legitimate healer who crossed ethical lines, a back-alley surgeon who asked no questions, or an alchemist who tested compounds on unwilling subjects, you have intimate knowledge of the body and its vulnerabilities. You know how to heal, but you also know exactly how to hurt.

Integrating into an existing character: A PC who spends time studying diseases, poisons, or drugs from Chapter 3 might adopt this background's feature mid-campaign. Use *TCoE* (p. 8 — "you can customize your background by replacing one feature with another") to swap your current background feature for **Anatomical Knowledge**. The personality traits can shift as the character becomes more clinical and detached about suffering.

Skill Proficiencies: Medicine, Nature
Tool Proficiencies: Herbalism kit, poisoner's kit
Equipment: A herbalism kit, a leather case containing scalpels and surgical tools, a journal of anatomical sketches, a set of common clothes stained with unidentifiable fluids, and a belt pouch containing 10 gp.

Feature: Anatomical Knowledge

You have studied the body extensively — both to heal and to harm. You can identify the cause of death of any corpse you examine (spending at least 1 minute). You also know the physical vulnerabilities of common humanoid races and beast types: when you spend 1 minute observing a creature, you can learn its damage vulnerabilities and resistances (if any) from the DM. Additionally, you can find work as a healer or surgeon in any settlement, no questions asked — your skills are too valuable for people to care about your methods.

Suggested Characteristics

Plague doctors range from genuinely compassionate healers who were forced into dark practices, to cold-blooded experimenters who view living creatures as test subjects.

d6	Personality Trait
1	I describe injuries and diseases in clinical detail, even when others find it disturbing.
2	I collect samples of everything — blood, tissue, venom, fungi. My pack smells terrible.
3	I'm genuinely kind to my patients. I just don't consider everyone a patient.
4	I keep meticulous notes on everything I observe. Everything.
5	I have a habit of diagnosing people's ailments without being asked.
6	I wash my hands constantly. You'd be surprised what you can catch.

d6	Ideal
1	**Knowledge.** Understanding the body is the highest pursuit. Ethics are secondary. (Neutral)
2	**Mercy.** I use my knowledge to end suffering — even if my methods are unorthodox. (Good)
3	**Power.** Knowing how bodies work means knowing how to control people. (Evil)
4	**Progress.** Science requires sacrifice. The few suffer so the many benefit. (Lawful)
5	**Curiosity.** I need to know what happens when I try this. I *need* to know. (Chaotic)
6	**Pragmatism.** Healing and harming are the same skill applied differently. (Any)

d6	Bond
1	I'm searching for a cure to a disease that killed someone I loved.
2	I owe a debt to the mentor who taught me — even though their methods were monstrous.
3	I carry a journal of failed experiments. Each entry is a person I couldn't save.
4	I was exiled from my medical guild for my methods. I'll prove them wrong.
5	I have a patient who depends on me for a treatment only I can provide.
6	I'm trying to create the perfect poison — or the perfect antidote. Maybe both.

d6	Flaw
1	I see people as collections of organs and systems, not as individuals.
2	I've tested substances on myself so many times that I'm mildly addicted to several.
3	I can't resist an interesting specimen, even when collecting it is dangerous or illegal.
4	I'm so used to death that I sometimes forget others find it upsetting.
5	I keep trophies from my most interesting cases. They're not always appropriate.
6	I have a god complex. I've held lives in my hands so many times that I've started to believe I deserve to.

Homebrew Warlock Options

⚠ **HOMEBREW**: This content is **not** from the original Book of Vile Darkness. These options expand the warlock class with evil-themed invocations, pact boons, and patron spell lists that complement the Demonologist and Diabolist patrons from Chapter 5, as well as the official Fiend patron (*PHB*) and Undead patron (*Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft*).

How to Use in Your Campaign

Pact Boon (Level 3). The Pact of the Flesh is chosen at warlock level 3, alongside Pact of the Chain/Blade/Tome. For existing warlocks, *TCoE* (p. 70 — "when you gain a warlock level, you can replace your pact boon with a different one") allows swapping your pact boon at a level-up — the DM can allow this with a story trigger (e.g., the symbiote is gifted by the patron).

Invocations (Level 2+). Warlocks learn new invocations at levels 2, 5, 7, 9, 12, 15, and 18. They can also swap one invocation at each level-up (*PHB* p. 107 — "when you gain a level in this class, you can choose one invocation you know and replace it with another"). New invocations from this list can be picked at any qualifying level-up — no special requirements beyond the listed prerequisites.

Expanded Patron Spells. Add these to the patron's expanded spell list. They become available immediately for any warlock with that patron — no level-up required. The warlock still chooses which to learn as normal.

Familiar Variants (Pact of the Chain, Level 3+). Available when summoning a new familiar via *find familiar*. Can be swapped by re-casting the spell.

Related content: Bard Spells, Cleric Spells, and Sorcerer/Wizard/Warlock Spells from Ch. 6 for the full evil spell lists. Additional Spells (homebrew) for more warlock options.

Existing Evil Warlock Patrons

Patron	Source	Theme
The Fiend	*PHB* p. 109 (the classic devil/demon patron — fire damage, temp HP on kills, fiendish resilience)	General fiendish pact
The Undead	*VRGtR* p. 30	Lich, vampire, or death lord patron
The Demon Prince	This book (Ch. 5)	Demonic chaos and summoning
The Infernal Contract	This book (Ch. 5)	Devil pacts and infernal law

---

New Pact Boon: Pact of the Flesh

Your patron has gifted you with a living symbiote — a piece of fiendish or aberrant tissue grafted to your body. It writhes beneath your skin and grants you terrible power.

When you gain this pact boon, choose the symbiote's form:

- **Maw**: A fanged mouth appears on your palm, forearm, or torso. You gain a bite attack that deals 1d8 piercing damage and counts as magical. When you hit with the bite, you can regain hit points equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum 1). You can use this healing a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, regaining all uses after a long rest. You can use the bite as your pact weapon for the purposes of Pact of the Blade invocations.
- **Eye**: A third eye opens on your forehead, the back of your hand, or your chest. You gain darkvision 120 ft. (or extend existing darkvision by 60 ft.). You can see through magical darkness to a distance of 30 feet. As an action, you can use the eye to cast *detect magic* without expending a spell slot.
- **Tendril**: A prehensile tendril (2–4 feet long) extends from your body. It can manipulate objects, open doors, and carry up to 20 pounds. It has a reach of 10 feet. You can use it to deliver touch-range warlock spells. It can also grapple creatures (using your Charisma modifier for the check).

The symbiote can be hidden under clothing but is visible when you use its abilities. It can't be removed without *remove curse* or *greater restoration*, which also ends your pact.

New Eldritch Invocations

Fiendish Invocations

Balor's Wrath

Prerequisite: 9th level, Fiend patron or Demon Prince patron

When you deal fire damage with a warlock spell, you can choose to make it hellfire. Hellfire damage ignores resistance to fire damage and treats immunity to fire damage as resistance instead.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum 1), regaining all uses after a long rest.

Devil's Tongue

Prerequisite: Fiend patron, Infernal Contract patron, or Pact of the Tome

You can cast *suggestion* once without expending a warlock spell slot. You can't do so again until you finish a long rest. When you cast *suggestion* this way, the target doesn't realize it was magically influenced when the spell ends (unlike the normal spell).

Cloak of Flies

Prerequisite: 5th level

As a bonus action, you can surround yourself with a swarm of biting flies for 1 minute. While the cloak is active:

- You gain advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks and disadvantage on all other Charisma checks.
- Creatures that start their turn within 5 feet of you take poison damage equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum 1).
- You are lightly obscured to creatures more than 30 feet away.

Once you use this invocation, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Designer's Note: This is inspired by the *XGtE* invocation of the same name but expanded slightly for this book's themes.

Infernal Constitution

Prerequisite: Fiend patron or Infernal Contract patron

You gain resistance to cold damage and poison damage. You also have advantage on saving throws against being poisoned.

Soul Keeper

Prerequisite: 12th level, Pact of the Tome

When a creature dies within 60 feet of you, you can use your reaction to record its name in your Book of Shadows. While the name is recorded, the creature can't be raised from the dead by any means short of *wish* or *true resurrection*.

You can hold a number of names equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum 1). You can erase a name as an action, freeing the soul.

Undead Invocations

Grasp of the Grave

Prerequisite: 5th level, Undead patron or Pact of the Blade

When you hit a creature with your pact weapon, you can force it to make a Strength saving throw against your warlock spell save DC. On a failure, the target's speed is reduced to 0 until the end of its next turn as spectral hands claw at it from the ground. You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Charisma modifier, regaining all uses after a long rest.

Deathless Vigor

Prerequisite: Undead patron

You no longer need to eat, drink, or breathe. You also gain resistance to necrotic damage. When you would be reduced to 0 hit points, you can drop to 1 hit point instead. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

Whispers of the Dead

Prerequisite: Pact of the Tome

You can cast *speak with dead* at will without expending a spell slot or material components. When you do, the corpse answers one additional question beyond the spell's normal limit.

Corruption Invocations

Corrupting Blast

Prerequisite: eldritch blast cantrip

When you hit a creature with *eldritch blast*, you can choose to deal necrotic damage instead of force damage. When you do, the damage is vile damage — it also reduces the target's hit point maximum by half the damage dealt (rounded down). You can use this feature once, regaining the ability to do so after a long rest.

Mask of Many Sins

Prerequisite: 7th level

You can cast *alter self* at will without expending a spell slot. When you use this invocation to change your appearance, *detect magic* does not reveal the illusion — only *truesight* or a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check can see through it.

Dark One's Own Luck (Enhanced)

Prerequisite: 9th level, Fiend patron

When you make an ability check or saving throw, you can add a d10 to the roll. You can use this feature after seeing the roll but before the DM announces the result. You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum 1), regaining all uses after a long rest.

Expanded Patron Spell Lists

The Fiend — Expanded (Vile Darkness)

These spells can be added to the Fiend patron's expanded spell list for campaigns using this book:

Spell Level	Spells
1st	*sorrow*, *angry ache*
2nd	*darkbolt*, *dance of ruin*
3rd	*abyssal might*, *hell's power*
4th	*stop heart*, *vile lance*
5th	*morality undone*, *soul shackles*

The Undead — Expanded (Vile Darkness)

Spell Level	Spells
1st	*slow consumption*, *boneblast*
2nd	*sap strength*, *song of festering death*
3rd	*curse of the putrid husk*, *sadism*
4th	*pox*, *stop heart*
5th	*soul shackles*, *morality undone*

Warlock Familiar Variants

When a warlock with Pact of the Chain summons a familiar, they can choose from these additional forms (in addition to the standard options):

Form	Type	CR	Special
Abyssal larva	Fiend	0	Telepathy 30 ft., resistance to fire
Crawling claw	Undead	0	*MM* p. 44; can deliver touch spells
Gazer	Aberration	1/2	*VGtM* p. 126; eye rays
Vargouille	Fiend	1	*VGtM* p. 195; stunning shriek, kiss

Designer's Note: The gazer and vargouille are official 5e creatures that make thematic familiar options for evil warlocks. The crawling claw is a classic undead servant. The abyssal larva is a new option representing a proto-demon.

Abyssal Larva

Tiny fiend (demon), chaotic evil

- **AC** 10, **HP** 4 (1d4 + 2), **Speed** 15 ft.
- **STR** 3 (−4), **DEX** 10 (+0), **CON** 14 (+2), **INT** 2 (−4), **WIS** 6 (−2), **CHA** 3 (−4)

- **Damage Resistances** fire, poison
- **Senses** darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 8
- **Languages** understands Abyssal but can't speak
- **CR** 0

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage.

Telepathic Bond. While the larva is on the same plane as its master, it can telepathically communicate simple emotions and sensations to its master within 30 feet.

Homebrew Dark Gifts, Trinkets & Items

⚠ **HOMEBREW**: This content is **not** from the original Book of Vile Darkness. Dark Gifts are inspired by *Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft* (p. 22). Evil trinkets expand the *PHB* trinket table (p. 160). Common/uncommon evil items fill the gap between mundane equipment and the powerful magic items in Chapter 6.

How to Use in Your Campaign

Dark Gifts: Any level, DM-awarded. Dark Gifts are **not** chosen by players — they are granted by the DM at dramatic story moments. Best introduced at level 5+ when the drawbacks won't instantly kill a character. Award them after:

- Surviving a near-death experience involving a fiend or undead
- Touching an evil artifact
- Making a dark bargain
- Spending 30+ days on a Lower Plane
- Being raised from the dead by dark magic

Trinkets: Level 1 (character creation). Roll on the Evil Trinket Table instead of the *PHB* trinket table (p. 160) for characters with dark backgrounds. Trinkets have no mechanical effect — they're pure flavor and plot hooks.

Common/Uncommon Items: Level 1+/3+. Distribute as loot, black market purchases, or quest rewards. See Appendix E for integration with *DMG* treasure tables.

Dark Blessings: Any level, DM-awarded. Minor rewards for service to evil powers. Easier to grant and revoke than Dark Gifts. Good for short-term rewards.

Existing campaign: All of this content drops in seamlessly. Dark Gifts are the most impactful — use them sparingly (one per PC maximum). Trinkets and common items can appear in any loot pile.

Related content: Evil Magic Items and Evil Artifacts (Ch. 6) for more powerful items. Corruption Tracker for managing the long-term effects of dark power.

Dark Gifts

Dark Gifts are supernatural boons granted by dark powers — fiends, dark gods, vestiges, or the land itself. Unlike magic items, they are part of the character. Each gift has a benefit and a drawback. A character can have only one Dark Gift at a time unless the DM rules otherwise.

A Dark Gift can be acquired through:

- A fiend's bargain (see Appendix C: Dark Bargain Worksheet)
- Exposure to a Lower Plane for 30+ days
- Touching an evil artifact
- Dying and being brought back by dark magic
- DM's discretion during a dramatic story moment

Dark Gift Table

d20	Dark Gift	Benefit	Drawback
1	**Eyes of the Abyss**	You gain truesight 10 ft. Your eyes turn solid black.	You have disadvantage on saving throws against madness effects. Bright light (sunlight) gives you disadvantage on attack rolls and Perception checks.
2	**Devil's Mark**	You can cast *detect thoughts* once per long rest (Cha is your spellcasting ability).	A fiendish sigil is branded on your skin. Devils can sense you within 1 mile. You can't benefit from *protection from evil and good*.
3	**Tongue of the Damned**	You learn Abyssal, Infernal, and Deep Speech. You can communicate telepathically with fiends within 60 ft.	You can no longer speak Celestial or Sylvan. Holy words (prayers, hymns) cause you 1d4 psychic damage when you speak them.
4	**Undying Hunger**	When you reduce a creature to 0 HP, you gain temporary HP equal to your level.	You must consume raw meat (at least 1 lb.) each day or gain 1 level of exhaustion. Normal food doesn't satisfy you.
5	**Shadow Step**	As a bonus action, you can teleport up to 30 ft. to an unoccupied space you can see that is in dim light or darkness. You can use this a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus per long rest.	You take 1d6 radiant damage when you start your turn in direct sunlight. Your shadow moves independently of you, unsettling onlookers.
6	**Corpse Skin**	You gain resistance to necrotic damage and don't need to breathe.	Your skin is cold and pale. You register as undead to *detect evil and good* and Divine Sense. Healing spells restore only half their normal hit points to you.
7	**Venomous Blood**	You are immune to poison damage and the poisoned condition. When a creature hits you with a melee attack within 5 ft., it takes 1d6 poison damage.	Your blood is visibly black-green. You can't benefit from potions of healing (they make you vomit). Herbalism kit remedies don't work on you.
8	**Fiendish Vigor**	Your hit point maximum increases by an amount equal to your level. This increases as you gain levels.	You age at twice the normal rate. Your appearance becomes gaunt and feverish. You have disadvantage on Charisma (Persuasion) checks with good-aligned creatures.
9	**Whispers of Power**	You learn two cantrips of your choice from any spell list. Your spellcasting ability for them is Charisma.	A voice whispers to you constantly. You have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing. Once per day (DM's choice of timing), the voice suggests a cruel or selfish action; DC 15 Wis save or you feel compelled to act on it.
10	**Death's Refusal**	When you fail a death saving throw, you can choose to succeed instead. You can use this feature twice, regaining all uses after a long rest.	Each time you use this feature, you gain a visible mark of death (gray streak in hair, sunken eyes, skeletal fingers). After using it 10 times total, you become undead (DM determines type).

d20	Dark Gift	Benefit	Drawback
11	**Predator's Instinct**	You gain proficiency in Survival and Stealth (or expertise if already proficient). You have advantage on attack rolls against creatures below half their HP maximum.	You must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw when you see a wounded creature or feel compelled to attack it. You have disadvantage on checks to show mercy or restraint.
12	**Soul Anchor**	You can't be banished, teleported, or plane shifted against your will. You have advantage on saving throws against being charmed or possessed.	Your soul is partially anchored to an object or location (DM determines). If the anchor is destroyed, you die instantly. You can sense the anchor's direction and distance at all times.
13	**Hellfire Heart**	You can cast *hellish rebuke* (*PHB* p. 250 — a reaction spell that deals 2d10 fire damage when you're hit) at 2nd level once per long rest without a spell slot. Cha is your spellcasting ability.	You radiate unnatural warmth. Water evaporates on your skin. You have vulnerability to cold damage.
14	**Bone Communion**	You can touch a bone or skull and learn the creature's name, race, and manner of death. Once per long rest, you can cast *speak with dead* this way without components.	You hear the faint murmur of the dead at all times near graves or battlefields. You have disadvantage on saving throws against being frightened by undead.
15	**Parasite Twin**	A vestigial face grows on your body (shoulder, back, or torso). It has darkvision 60 ft. and is always awake — you can't be surprised. It can speak and has your Intelligence.	The twin has its own personality (DM controls it) and occasionally speaks at inopportune moments. It can be targeted separately (AC 10, 1 HP — if destroyed, you take 4d6 psychic damage and it regrows in 1d4 days).
16	**Abyssal Fortitude**	You have advantage on Constitution saving throws against spells and other magical effects. You also gain proficiency in the Athletics skill (or expertise if already proficient).	Your body is subtly wrong — joints bend slightly too far, your pulse is irregular, and you smell faintly of brimstone. Medicine checks on you are made with disadvantage. You have disadvantage on Dexterity saving throws — your warped body is slow to react.
17	**Chains of Binding**	You can cast *hold person* (*PHB* p. 251 — paralyze a humanoid on a failed Wis save) once per long rest without a spell slot. Cha is your spellcasting ability. Spectral chains appear around the target.	Iron and steel feel painfully cold to you. You have disadvantage on checks to escape grapples, manacles, or restraints — chains seem to tighten around you.
18	**Carrion Call**	You can summon 1d4 **swarms of ravens** or **swarms of rats** (*MM* p. 339/p. 339 — CR 1/4 swarms) once per long rest. They obey simple commands for 1 hour.	Carrion birds follow you visibly. Your presence spoils food within 10 feet over 8 hours. Animals other than vermin are hostile to you.
19	**Dread Gaze**	As an action, you can force one creature within 30 ft. that can see you to make a Wis save (DC 8 + prof + Cha mod) or be frightened of you for 1 minute (repeat save at end of each turn). You can use this a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus per long rest.	Your eyes glow faintly red in darkness. Children and animals instinctively fear you. You have disadvantage on Charisma (Persuasion) checks with any creature that has seen your eyes glow.
20	**Stolen Fate**	Once per long rest, when a creature within 30 ft. succeeds on a saving throw, you can force it to reroll and use the lower result.	Once per long rest (DM's choice of timing), when *you* succeed on a saving throw, you must reroll and use the lower result. Fate is a zero-sum game.

Evil Trinket Table

Roll on this table instead of (or in addition to) the *PHB* trinket table for characters with dark backgrounds.

d100	Trinket
01–02	A finger bone that is always warm to the touch
03–04	A vial of blood that never coagulates
05–06	A black candle that burns with a green flame and never melts
07–08	A coin from a dead man's eyes — it always lands on the same side
09–10	A lock of hair that writhes when exposed to moonlight
11–12	A small mirror that shows your reflection with red eyes
13–14	A tooth from a fiend, set in a silver ring
15–16	A page torn from a spellbook, written in blood — the spell is incomplete
17–18	A compass that always points toward the nearest graveyard
19–20	A child's doll with one eye missing — the remaining eye seems to follow you
21–22	A key made of bone that fits no known lock
23–24	A small bell that makes no sound when rung, but dogs howl nearby
25–26	A jar of pickled eyeballs that occasionally blink
27–28	A love letter written to someone who has been dead for centuries
29–30	A deck of cards where every face card depicts the same person — you
31–32	A piece of chalk that only writes in Infernal
33–34	A locket containing a portrait that ages while you don't
35–36	A quill that writes by itself when dipped in blood
37–38	A small music box that plays a lullaby no one recognizes — it makes children cry
39–40	A glass eye that occasionally looks in a different direction than you left it
41–42	A pressed flower that smells of decay
43–44	A handkerchief perpetually stained with fresh blood
45–46	A small wooden coffin containing a dead moth that reassembles itself each dawn
47–48	A wanted poster with your face on it — from a city you've never visited
49–50	A shard of obsidian that whispers when held to your ear
51–52	A tattoo that moves across your skin when you're not looking
53–54	A pair of dice carved from a saint's knucklebones
55–56	A map of a dungeon that doesn't exist — yet
57–58	A small hourglass filled with black sand that runs upward
59–60	A leather-bound journal — every page is blank except the last, which reads "I'm sorry"
61–62	A silver spoon that tarnishes any liquid it touches
63–64	A raven's feather that drips ink when squeezed
65–66	A small stone that is always ice-cold, even in fire
67–68	A noose made of silk rope — it ties itself into a hangman's knot overnight
69–70	A perfume bottle that smells different to everyone — always their worst memory
71–72	A set of prayer beads made from teeth
73–74	A mask made of dried skin that fits your face perfectly
75–76	A small cage containing a beetle that never dies
77–78	A letter of recommendation from a lich
79–80	A coin purse that always contains exactly 1 copper piece, no matter how many you remove
81–82	A small painting of a door — sometimes the door is open, sometimes closed
83–84	A thimble that fills with blood at midnight

d100	Trinket
85–86	A piece of parchment with your death certificate — the date is blank
87–88	A small figurine of a demon that is warm to the touch and faintly vibrates
89–90	A bookmark made from a strip of human skin with a passage marked: "Chapter 7: Damnation"
91–92	A ring that turns your finger black while worn — the stain fades after a day
93–94	A small bottle labeled "Tears of an Angel" — it's empty
95–96	A playing card (the Ace of Spades) that always returns to your pocket
97–98	A small skull (mouse-sized) that chatters its jaw when danger is near
99–00	A contract written in Infernal with your name already signed — you don't remember signing it

---

Common & Uncommon Evil Items

These items fill the gap between mundane equipment and the powerful magic items in Chapter 6. They're perfect for low-level evil campaigns or as minor loot.

Common Items

Candle of Dark Prayer

Wondrous item, common

This black candle burns for 4 hours. While lit, creatures within 10 feet have advantage on Intelligence (Religion) checks related to evil deities, fiends, and dark rituals. The candle sheds dim light in a 5-foot radius (it does not shed bright light).

Corpse Salt

Wondrous item, common (consumable)

A pouch of salt harvested from a corpse preserved by dark magic. When sprinkled in a 5-foot square, undead that enter the area or start their turn there must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or be unable to enter the area until the start of their next turn. The salt loses its potency after 1 hour or if it gets wet. One pouch contains 3 uses.

Dread Mask

Wondrous item, common

A mask carved from dark wood or bone. While wearing it, you have advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks but disadvantage on Charisma (Persuasion) checks. The mask can be worn over a helmet.

Inkwell of Binding

Wondrous item, common

Ink made with a drop of devil's blood. Contracts written with this ink glow faintly red when a signatory breaks the terms. The ink is not magical enough to enforce the contract — it merely reveals the breach. One inkwell contains enough ink for 10 contracts.

Whispering Skull

Wondrous item, common

A humanoid skull that occasionally whispers fragments of sentences in a dead language. Once per day, you can ask the skull a yes-or-no question about the local area (within 1 mile). It answers truthfully but cryptically, using only the words "yes," "no," or "uncertain." The skull knows only what a person buried in this area might have known in life.

Uncommon Items

Amulet of Dark Warding

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

While wearing this amulet, you have advantage on saving throws against being turned (if you are undead or a fiend). If you are neither, you instead have advantage on saving throws against effects that detect your alignment or creature type (such as *detect evil and good* or Divine Sense). Your true nature is hidden — you register as unaligned and as a humanoid.

Blade of the Sacrificer

Weapon (dagger), uncommon

This curved obsidian dagger is designed for ritual sacrifice. When you use this dagger to kill a creature as part of a sacrifice ritual (see Chapter 2), the sacrifice's benefits are increased by one tier (minor becomes standard, standard becomes major, etc.). The dagger deals only 1d4 slashing damage in normal combat and has no attack bonus.

Cloak of Graves

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

This tattered gray cloak smells faintly of earth. While wearing it, you can use an action to become invisible in dim light or darkness. The invisibility lasts until you move, attack, or cast a spell. You can use this feature 3 times, regaining all uses at dusk.

Fiend Caller's Bell

Wondrous item, uncommon

A small iron bell inscribed with Infernal runes. When rung (an action), all fiends within 300 feet are aware of your location and know you wish to parley. Fiends are not compelled to respond, but curious or bored fiends often do. The bell has no effect on fiends in combat.

Soulcatcher Gem

Wondrous item, uncommon (consumable)

A smoky quartz gem worth 100 gp. When a creature dies within 10 feet of you, you can use your reaction to trap a fragment of its soul in the gem. The gem then functions as a material component for *speak with dead* (targeting the trapped soul, no corpse needed) or can be consumed during crafting to provide a 50 gp material component reduction. The gem crumbles to dust after one use.

Vial of Liquid Night

Potion, uncommon

This pitch-black liquid seems to absorb light. When poured on the ground (an action), it creates a 15-foot-radius sphere of magical darkness centered on the point where it was poured. The darkness lasts for 10 minutes and can't be dispelled by nonmagical light. *Daylight* or similar magic dispels it. One vial, one use.

Wristband of the Torturer

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

An iron wristband set with a small red gem. While wearing it, you have advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks made against restrained or incapacitated creatures. Additionally, when you deal damage to a restrained creature, you deal an extra 1d4 psychic damage as you instinctively target nerve clusters and pressure points.

Dark Blessings

Dark Blessings are minor supernatural rewards granted by evil powers for service rendered. They function like the *DMG* blessings (p. 227–228) but with an evil twist. Each lasts until removed by *remove curse* or *dispel evil and good*, or until the granting entity revokes it.

d8	Dark Blessing	Benefit
1	**Blessing of the Pit**	You gain resistance to fire damage. Your skin is uncomfortably warm to the touch.
2	**Blessing of the Grave**	You gain 10 temporary hit points each dawn. You don't need to sleep (but still need to rest for long rest benefits).
3	**Blessing of Venom**	Your melee weapon attacks deal an extra 1d4 poison damage. Your saliva is mildly toxic (harmless to you).
4	**Blessing of Shadow**	You can cast *pass without trace* once per long rest without a spell slot. Your shadow is unnaturally dark.
5	**Blessing of Cruelty**	When you score a critical hit, the target must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened of you until the end of its next turn.
6	**Blessing of the Deceiver**	You can cast *disguise self* at will. Your reflection in mirrors occasionally shows your true form even while disguised.
7	**Blessing of Undeath**	You have advantage on death saving throws. Healing spells cast on you heal for the minimum amount.
8	**Blessing of the Abyss**	Once per long rest, when you take damage, you can use your reaction to teleport up to 15 feet to an unoccupied space you can see. Your destination must be in dim light or darkness.

Homebrew Additional Spells

⚠ **HOMEBREW**: This content is **not** from the original Book of Vile Darkness. These spells fill gaps in the converted spell lists, ensuring that every spellcasting class has meaningful evil-themed options. They draw inspiration from 5e design principles and the themes of this book.

How to Use in Your Campaign

Add to class spell lists. These spells expand the lists in Chapter 6. See Campaign Integration Guide: Spell Acquisition for how each class learns new spells.

- **Prepared casters** (druid): Add to the class list — available immediately at the appropriate spell level.
- **Known-spell casters** (ranger, sorcerer, warlock): Add to the available list — PC picks at level-up.
- **Spellbook casters** (wizard): PC must find a scroll or spellbook containing the spell and copy it (50 gp + 2 hrs per spell level, *PHB* p. 114 — the wizard's "Copying a Spell" rules for adding spells to your spellbook).
- **Barbarian Blood Rite**: Not a spell — available to any barbarian with Religion or Arcana proficiency. No spell slot required.

Existing campaign: Introduce through found scrolls, dark tomes, fiendish tutors, or visions from a patron. The DM can also simply add these to the available lists at any time.

Spell level availability: A character can cast a spell when they have a spell slot of that level. See *PHB* p. 201 for the spell slot progression table (shows which spell levels each class unlocks at each character level).

Spell Level	Earliest Character Level
1st	1 (full casters) / 2 (rangers, paladins)
2nd	3 / 5
3rd	5 / 9
4th	7 / 13
5th	9 / 17
6th	11 (full casters only)

Related content: Appendix F for the complete consolidated spell list (book + homebrew). Bard, Cleric, Oathbreaker, Druid, and Sorcerer/Wizard/Warlock spell lists from Ch. 6.

Spells by Class

Ranger Spells (New)

The original Book of Vile Darkness had no ranger spells. These fill that gap, themed around dark hunting, corruption of nature, and predatory magic. Pairs well with the Dread Stalker subclass.

Predator's Mark

1st-level divination (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 bonus action
- **Range**: 90 feet
- **Components**: V
- **Duration**: Concentration, up to 1 hour

You mark one creature you can see within range as prey. For the duration, you deal an extra 1d4 necrotic damage to the target the first time you hit it with a weapon attack on each of your turns. You also know the exact direction and distance to the target while it is on the same plane.

This spell ends if you cast it again or if the target drops to 0 hit points.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the extra damage increases by 1d4 for every two slot levels above 1st.

Blightfang

2nd-level necromancy (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 bonus action
- **Range**: Self
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Your weapon or natural weapon becomes coated in necrotic venom. For the duration, your weapon attacks deal an extra 1d6 necrotic damage on a hit. A creature hit by the weapon must succeed on a **Constitution saving throw** or be poisoned until the end of its next turn.

Corruption of the Wild

3rd-level transmutation (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: 120 feet
- **Components**: V, S, M (a withered leaf)
- **Duration**: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You corrupt a 30-foot-radius area of natural terrain within range. For the duration:

- The area becomes difficult terrain as plants twist and writhe.
- Creatures that start their turn in the area must succeed on a **Constitution saving throw** or take 2d6 poison damage.
- Beasts in the area become hostile to all non-evil creatures.
- The area is lightly obscured by dark mist.

Death's Pursuit

4th-level necromancy (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: 60 feet
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You curse one creature you can see within range with the inevitability of death. The target must succeed on a **Wisdom saving throw** or be cursed for the duration. While cursed:

- The target can't regain hit points.
- The target takes 1d8 necrotic damage at the start of each of its turns.
- If the target moves more than 30 feet away from you on its turn, it takes an additional 2d8 necrotic damage.

The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the curse on a success.

Soul Snare

5th-level necromancy (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 reaction, which you take when a creature within 60 feet of you drops to 0 hit points
- **Range**: 60 feet

- **Components**: V, S, M (a gem worth at least 100 gp)
- **Duration**: Instantaneous
- **Corruption Cost**: 1 level of exhaustion

You trap the dying creature's soul in the gem. While the soul is trapped:

- The creature can't be raised from the dead by any means short of *wish* or *true resurrection*.
- You can use an action to interrogate the soul (as *speak with dead*, but the soul has full knowledge and must answer truthfully).
- The gem can be used as a material component worth 500 gp for crafting purposes.

Destroying the gem or casting *dispel evil and good* on it frees the soul.

Sorcerer Spells (New)

Chaos Bolt (Abyssal Variant)

1st-level evocation (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: 120 feet
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: Instantaneous

Designer's Note: *Chaos bolt* already exists in *XGtE*. This variant replaces the random damage types with explicitly evil ones for Fiend-Touched sorcerers.

You hurl a bolt of chaotic Abyssal energy at a creature within range. Make a ranged spell attack. On a hit, the target takes 2d8 damage. Choose the damage type based on the number rolled on one of the d8s:

d8	Damage Type
1	Fire (hellfire)
2	Necrotic
3	Poison
4	Psychic
5	Cold (grave cold)
6	Necrotic (vile — reduces HP max)
7	Fire
8	Choose any from this list

If you roll the same number on both d8s, the bolt leaps to a different target within 30 feet, and you make a new attack roll.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, each target takes 1d6 extra damage for each slot level above 1st.

Hellfire Eruption

3rd-level evocation (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action

- **Range**: 150 feet
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: Instantaneous

Hellfire erupts from a point you choose within range. Each creature in a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on that point must make a **Dexterity saving throw**. A target takes 3d6 fire damage and 3d6 necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. Hellfire ignores resistance to fire damage.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the fire damage or the necrotic damage (your choice) increases by 1d6 for each slot level above 3rd.

Design Note: At 6d6 (avg 21), this is weaker than *fireball* (8d6, avg 28) in raw damage but compensates by splitting damage types and ignoring fire resistance. This makes it situationally better against fire-resistant creatures while remaining weaker in the general case — matching the framework principle of undershooting official power levels.

Fiendish Transformation

5th-level transmutation (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: Self
- **Components**: V, S, M (a drop of fiend's blood)
- **Duration**: Concentration, up to 10 minutes
- **Corruption Cost**: 1 level of exhaustion

You assume a fiendish form. For the duration:

- You gain a flying speed of 60 feet.
- You choose two of the following damage types: fire, cold, or lightning. You have resistance to the chosen types.
- Your melee attacks deal an extra 2d6 necrotic damage.
- You have advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks and saving throws against being frightened.

When the spell ends, you must succeed on a **DC 15 Charisma saving throw** or gain one permanent minor cosmetic fiendish feature (DM's choice).

Wizard Spells (New)

Blood Reading

1st-level divination (evil, ritual)

- **Casting Time**: 1 minute
- **Range**: Touch
- **Components**: V, S, M (a drop of the target's blood)
- **Duration**: Instantaneous

You divine information from a creature's blood. You must have a drop of blood from the target (fresh within 24 hours). You learn one of the following (your choice):

- The creature's current hit points and hit point maximum.
- The creature's creature type and any conditions affecting it.
- The direction and approximate distance to the creature (if on the same plane).
- Whether the creature is under the effects of a curse, disease, or poison.

Necrotic Grasp

2nd-level necromancy (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: 30 feet
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: Concentration, up to 1 minute

A spectral skeletal hand appears at a point you choose within range and grasps at a creature there. The target must succeed on a **Strength saving throw** or be restrained by the hand for the duration. While restrained, the target takes 2d6 necrotic damage at the start of each of its turns. The target can use its action to make a Strength check against your spell save DC, freeing itself on a success.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d6 for each slot level above 2nd.

Animate Shadow

3rd-level illusion (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 action
- **Range**: 60 feet
- **Components**: V, S
- **Duration**: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You animate the shadow of a creature you can see within range. The shadow detaches and becomes a **shadow** (*MM* p. 269) under your control for the duration. It acts on your initiative and obeys your verbal commands (no action required). If the shadow is destroyed or the spell ends, it returns to its owner.

The creature whose shadow was stolen has disadvantage on Dexterity saving throws and Dexterity (Stealth) checks for the duration (it casts no shadow, which is deeply unsettling).

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 5th level or higher, you can animate one additional shadow for every two slot levels above 3rd.

Soul Cage (Enhanced)

6th-level necromancy (evil)

- **Casting Time**: 1 reaction, which you take when a humanoid you can see within 60 feet dies
- **Range**: 60 feet
- **Components**: V, S, M (a tiny silver cage worth 100 gp)
- **Duration**: 8 hours

Designer's Note: *Soul cage* exists in *XGtE*. This version adds vile damage options for campaigns using this book.

This functions as *soul cage* (*XGtE* p. 165) with the following additional option:

- **Vile Empowerment.** You consume a fragment of the trapped soul. Your next spell that deals necrotic damage within 1 minute deals vile damage instead (also reduces the target's hit point maximum). This uses one of the soul's six charges.

Barbarian Cantrip Alternative

Barbarians don't cast spells, but the Path of the Bloodrager (see Homebrew Subclasses) can benefit from these ritual options:

Blood Rite (Non-Spell Ritual)

Requires proficiency in Religion or Arcana

During a short rest, you can perform a blood rite by cutting yourself (taking 1d6 slashing damage that can't be reduced). Choose one benefit that lasts until your next short or long rest:

- **Rite of Fury**: Your rage damage bonus increases by 1.
- **Rite of Iron**: You gain temporary hit points equal to your barbarian level.
- **Rite of the Hunt**: You have advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks to track a specific creature type (chosen when you perform the rite).

Consolidated New Spell List

Spell	Level	School	Classes
Blood Reading	1st	Divination	Wizard
Predator's Mark	1st	Divination	Ranger
Blightfang	2nd	Necromancy	Ranger
Necrotic Grasp	2nd	Necromancy	Wizard, Warlock
Animate Shadow	3rd	Illusion	Wizard, Warlock
Corruption of the Wild	3rd	Transmutation	Ranger, Druid
Hellfire Eruption	3rd	Evocation	Sorcerer, Warlock
Death's Pursuit	4th	Necromancy	Ranger
Fiendish Transformation	5th	Transmutation	Sorcerer, Warlock
Soul Snare	5th	Necromancy	Ranger, Warlock
Soul Cage (Enhanced)	6th	Necromancy	Wizard, Warlock
Chaos Bolt (Abyssal)	1st	Evocation	Sorcerer

Homebrew Evil Organizations

⚠ **HOMEBREW**: This content is **not** from the original Book of Vile Darkness. These organizations provide ready-to-use villain factions, cult structures, and criminal enterprises for DMs running evil-themed campaigns. Each includes a hierarchy, goals, membership benefits, and adventure hooks.

How to Use in Your Campaign

Any level, any tier. Organizations are DM tools — they provide structure for villain factions, recurring antagonists, and long-term campaign arcs. PCs can encounter these groups as enemies, infiltrate them, or (in evil campaigns) join them.

New campaign: Pick one or two organizations as the campaign's primary antagonists. Use their hierarchy to create a ladder of increasingly powerful villains. The lowest-ranking members appear at tier 1; the leaders are tier 3–4 threats.

Existing campaign: Drop in any organization when you need a villain faction. The **Ashen Covenant** works for undead-heavy campaigns, the **Crimson Ledger** for urban intrigue, the **Fleshweavers' Circle** for body horror, and the **Obsidian Conclave** for fiend-focused plots.

For evil PCs: A PC can join an organization by meeting its requirements and completing an initiation. Membership grants the listed benefits but also obligations — the organization *will* ask for favors. Use the Dark Bargain Worksheet to formalize the arrangement.

Related content: Evil Backgrounds (especially Cult Initiate and Infernal Contractor) pair naturally with these organizations. Evil NPC Gallery provides stat blocks for organization members.

The Ashen Covenant

A secret society of necromancers, death clerics, and undead lords who believe that undeath is the next stage of mortal evolution. They seek to create a world where the boundary between life and death is erased.

Structure

- **Rank 1 — Pallbearer** (initiates, CR 1/4–1): Grave robbers, corpse suppliers, and low-level cultists who handle logistics.
- **Rank 2 — Mourner** (agents, CR 2–5): Necromancers and death clerics who perform rituals, create undead, and recruit new members.
- **Rank 3 — Dirge Singer** (officers, CR 6–10): Powerful spellcasters who command undead armies and manage regional cells. Often use the College of Requiem or School of Hemomancy.
- **Rank 4 — Deathless** (leaders, CR 11–17): Liches, vampire lords, or death knights who have already achieved undeath. They direct the Covenant's long-term plans.
- **The Ashen One** (supreme leader, CR 18+): A mythic lich or demilich who founded the Covenant centuries ago. May be a vestige, a phylactery-bound intelligence, or a death god's avatar.

Goals

1. Discover or create a ritual that grants true immortality through undeath without the drawbacks (madness, soul loss, etc.)
2. Establish "necropolis cities" — settlements where undead and living coexist under Covenant rule
3. Destroy or corrupt temples of life-domain deities
4. Collect souls for use in mass-undeath rituals

Membership Benefits

- **Rank 1**: Access to *animate dead* scrolls at half price; safe houses in major cities
- **Rank 2**: One free casting of *gentle repose* per week; access to the Covenant's library of necromantic lore (advantage on Intelligence (Arcana) checks related to undead)
- **Rank 3**: A permanent undead servant (use **wight** stat block, *MM* p. 300 — a powerful undead with its own attacks and the ability to create zombies from humanoids it kills); access to rare necromantic spells
- **Rank 4**: The Covenant funds your research (1,000 gp per month for crafting); access to the Ashen One's phylactery network (if you die, your soul is preserved for 30 days, allowing *resurrection*)

Initiation

To join, a candidate must:

1. Bring a fresh corpse to a Covenant cell (any humanoid)
2. Successfully cast *animate dead* or assist in a necromantic ritual (DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check)
3. Swear an oath of secrecy in the Dark Speech (or have it spoken over them)

Adventure Hooks

- A plague of undead is traced back to a Covenant cell operating beneath a cemetery
- The party discovers a Covenant member has infiltrated the local temple of Kelemvor
- A Covenant Dirge Singer offers the party a deal: help them retrieve an artifact, and they'll raise a dead party member for free
- The Ashen One's phylactery is hidden in a dungeon the party needs to clear for unrelated reasons

---

The Crimson Ledger

An underground network of assassins, information brokers, and blackmailers who trade in secrets, favors, and lives. They operate through a system of "debts" — anyone who uses their services owes them, and the Ledger always collects.

Structure

- **Rank 1 — Ink** (informants, CR 1/4–1): Beggars, servants, and minor criminals who gather information. They don't know they work for the Ledger — they think they're selling gossip to a local fence.
- **Rank 2 — Quill** (agents, CR 2–5): Skilled operatives who carry out assassinations, thefts, and blackmail. Often use the Shade or Cancer Mage archetypes.
- **Rank 3 — Scribe** (officers, CR 6–10): Regional managers who coordinate operations, maintain the debt ledger, and recruit new Quills. Often use the Diabolist warlock patron (their contracts are literal infernal contracts).
- **Rank 4 — Author** (directors, CR 11–15): The inner circle who set policy and approve high-profile operations. Each Author controls a major city or region.
- **The Bookkeeper** (supreme leader, CR 16+): No one has ever seen the Bookkeeper. They communicate through enchanted ledger pages that appear in Scribes' books. May be a devil, a lich, or a mortal genius.

Goals

1. Accumulate debts from every powerful person in every major city — kings, archmages, guild leaders, high priests
2. Use those debts to control political outcomes without anyone realizing a single organization is pulling the strings
3. Eliminate rival criminal organizations and absorb their networks
4. Acquire the *Book of Vile Darkness* (the actual artifact — see Ch. 6) for the Bookkeeper's personal use

Membership Benefits

- **Rank 1**: 5 gp per useful piece of information delivered; protection from local law enforcement (the Ledger bribes guards)
- **Rank 2**: Access to the Ledger's safe houses and disguise kits; one free *sending* spell per week (via enchanted ink); poison supplies at half price (see Ch. 3)
- **Rank 3**: A network of 2d6 Inks in your city; access to the Ledger's blackmail files (advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks against anyone in the files); one free infernal contract per month
- **Rank 4**: The Ledger funds your operations (500 gp per month); access to the Bookkeeper's intelligence network (you can learn one secret about any named NPC, once per week)

Initiation

To join as a Quill, a candidate must:

1. Complete a contract (assassination, theft, or blackmail) assigned by a Scribe
2. Provide a personal secret as collateral (the Ledger holds it as insurance)
3. Sign an infernal contract pledging loyalty (violation triggers a *bestow curse* effect)

Adventure Hooks

- A party member's backstory secret appears in a Crimson Ledger blackmail file
- The party is hired to protect a noble who is being blackmailed by the Ledger
- A Quill defects and asks the party for protection — but the Ledger sends assassins
- The party discovers that the Bookkeeper is actually a devil who has been collecting souls through the debt system

---

The Fleshweavers' Circle

A cabal of mad artificers, transmuters, and bio-alchemists who believe that the mortal body is a rough draft that can be improved through magical surgery, grafting, and mutation. Their experiments are horrifying but occasionally produce genuine breakthroughs.

Structure

- **Rank 1 — Apprentice** (students, CR 1/4–1): Assistants who prepare materials, clean labs, and tend to "subjects." Many are desperate people who volunteered for experiments in exchange for food and shelter.
- **Rank 2 — Sculptor** (practitioners, CR 2–5): Trained fleshweavers who perform grafts and mutations. Often use the Fleshsmith subclass or School of Hemomancy.
- **Rank 3 — Architect** (masters, CR 6–10): Senior fleshweavers who design new grafts, breed chimeric creatures, and manage laboratories. Each Architect has a specialty (limbs, organs, neural tissue, etc.).
- **Rank 4 — Masterwork** (leaders, CR 11–15): Fleshweavers who have extensively modified their own bodies. Each is a unique creature — part humanoid, part aberration, part construct. They are living proof of the Circle's philosophy.
- **The Progenitor** (founder, CR 16+): The Circle's founder, who has transcended their original form entirely. They exist as a massive, building-sized organism that serves as both leader and laboratory. Think of a living dungeon made of flesh.

Goals

1. Perfect the art of flesh grafting — create grafts with no rejection risk and no side effects
2. Create a new species — a "perfected" humanoid that combines the best traits of multiple races
3. Acquire specimens of every creature type for study (this means capturing live monsters)
4. Prove that their work is not evil — that improving the body is a form of art and medicine

Membership Benefits

- **Rank 1**: Free room and board in a Circle laboratory; basic medical care (the Circle's healers are excellent, if unorthodox)
- **Rank 2**: One free flesh graft per month; access to the Circle's alchemical supplies (alchemist's supplies and herbalism kit at half price)

- **Rank 3**: Two free grafts per month; access to the Circle's specimen library (advantage on Intelligence (Nature) checks related to creature anatomy); one free *greater restoration* per week (the Circle's healers can fix almost anything)
- **Rank 4**: The Circle funds your research (1,500 gp per month); access to Greater Flesh Grafts; the Progenitor shares their research notes (you learn one spell from any class list, once)

Initiation

To join as a Sculptor, a candidate must:

1. Demonstrate proficiency with alchemist's supplies, herbalism kit, or Medicine skill
2. Successfully perform a flesh graft on a willing subject (DC 15 Intelligence (Medicine) check)
3. Accept one experimental graft on themselves (DM chooses the graft — it may have unexpected side effects)

Adventure Hooks

- People are disappearing near a Circle laboratory — they're being used as unwilling test subjects
- A Circle Sculptor offers the party free healing and grafts, but the grafts have hidden tracking magic
- The Progenitor has created a flesh golem army and is marching on a city
- A party member's lost limb can be regrown by the Circle — but the price is delivering a live dragon wyrmling for study

---

The Obsidian Conclave

A network of fiend-worshippers, diabolists, and demonologists who seek to weaken the barriers between the Material Plane and the Lower Planes. Unlike most cults, the Conclave is organized, patient, and politically connected.

Structure

- **Rank 1 — Acolyte** (cultists, CR 1/4–1): True believers who attend rituals, recruit new members, and provide cover identities. Many are ordinary citizens — merchants, guards, nobles — who worship fiends in secret.
- **Rank 2 — Invoker** (summoners, CR 2–5): Spellcasters who can summon and bind minor fiends. Often use the Demonologist or Diabolist warlock patrons.
- **Rank 3 — Herald** (officers, CR 6–10): Powerful casters who maintain permanent summoning circles, negotiate with fiends, and manage regional cells. Often use the Archfiend Domain.
- **Rank 4 — Voice** (inner circle, CR 11–15): Each Voice serves a specific archfiend and channels that fiend's will. They are the Conclave's strategic leaders. See Demon Lords and Archdevils for their patrons.
- **The Mouth** (supreme leader, CR 16+): A mortal who has been granted a fragment of a fiend lord's power. The Mouth can speak with the authority of their patron and channel divine-level magic. They may be a half-fiend, a cambion, or a mortal on the verge of apotheosis.

Goals

1. Open permanent portals between the Material Plane and the Lower Planes (see Planar Travel)
2. Weaken divine protections — corrupt temples, kill clerics, destroy holy relics
3. Install fiend-worshippers in positions of political power
4. Prepare the Material Plane for a fiendish invasion (the "Great Unbinding")

Membership Benefits

- **Rank 1**: A dark gift granted by the Conclave's patron fiend; access to cult safe houses

- **Rank 2**: One free fiend summoning per month (the Conclave provides the material components); access to forbidden texts (advantage on Intelligence (Arcana) checks related to fiends)
- **Rank 3**: A permanent imp or quasit servant; access to the Conclave's summoning circles (reduce casting time of *summon lesser demons*/*summon greater demon* by 1 round); one free sacrifice reward per month
- **Rank 4**: Direct communication with an archfiend (as *commune*, once per week); the Conclave funds your operations (2,000 gp per month); access to fiendish grafts (as Fleshsmith grafts but fiend-themed)

Initiation

To join as an Invoker, a candidate must:

1. Attend three Conclave rituals as an Acolyte
2. Successfully summon a fiend of CR 1 or higher (or assist in a summoning ritual)
3. Make a dark bargain with the Conclave's patron fiend
4. Sacrifice a living creature in the fiend's name (see Sacrifice, Ch. 2)

Adventure Hooks

- A series of murders follows a pattern that matches a fiendish summoning ritual — the Conclave is using the city as a giant summoning circle
- A Conclave Herald has infiltrated the royal court as an advisor
- The party discovers a Conclave portal that is slowly growing — if it reaches full size, a fiend army will pour through
- A Voice offers the party an alliance against a mutual enemy — but the price is helping open "just one small portal"

Using Organizations in Your Campaign

As Antagonists

Use the organization's hierarchy as a villain ladder. The party encounters Rank 1 members at tier 1, works their way up to Rank 2–3 at tier 2, and faces the leadership at tier 3–4. Each rank provides a natural escalation of threat and complexity.

As Patrons (Evil Campaigns)

In an evil campaign, PCs can join an organization and rise through its ranks. Use the membership benefits as rewards for completing missions. The organization's goals become the campaign's goals.

Mixing Organizations

Organizations can interact with each other:

- The **Ashen Covenant** and **Obsidian Conclave** compete for souls — the Covenant wants them for undeath, the Conclave wants them for fiendish tribute
- The **Crimson Ledger** sells information to all three other organizations — and plays them against each other
- The **Fleshweavers' Circle** provides grafts and biological weapons to anyone who can pay, making them useful allies or dangerous suppliers for any faction

Quick NPC Generator

Roll on this table to quickly generate an organization member:

d4	Organization	d6	Rank	d8	Quirk
1	Ashen Covenant	1–2	Rank 1	1	Genuinely believes they're doing good
2	Crimson Ledger	3–4	Rank 2	2	Secretly wants to leave but can't
3	Fleshweavers' Circle	5	Rank 3	3	Has a personal vendetta against the party
4	Obsidian Conclave	6	Rank 4	4	Is a double agent for another organization
				5	Is being blackmailed into service
				6	Is the last survivor of a destroyed cell
				7	Has a family member in the party's hometown
				8	Is more powerful than their rank suggests